

Kaczynski

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Contents

Afterthoughts to Technological Slavery	9
1.	11
2.	11
3.	12
4.	13
5.	15
 Answer to Some Comments Made in Green Anarchist	 17
 Hit where it hurts	 23
1. The Purpose Of This Article.	25
2. Technology Is The Target.	25
3. The Timber Industry Is A Side Issue.	26
4. Why The System Is Tough.	26
5. It Is Useless To Attack The System In Terms Of Its Own Values.	27
6. Radicals Must Attack The System At The Decisive Points.	28
7. Biotechnology May Be The Best Target For Political Attack.	29
8. All Biotechnology Must Be Attacked As A Matter Of Principle.	29
9. Radicals Are Not Yet Attacking Biotech Effectively.	30
10. Hit Where It Hurts.	30
 How I Blew Up Harold Snilly	 33
 The Littering Ape	 35
 Marcos Loves Modernization	 37
 Ship of Fools	 39
 Ted Kaczynski's Interview with the John Jay Sentinel	 43

Ted Kaczynski Letter to A.O.	49
Ted Kaczynski letter to M.K.	51
Ted Kaczynski on Individualists Tending Toward Savagery (ITS)	55
The Road to Revolution	57
When Non-Violence is Suicide	63
Ted Kaczynski's Letter to the Saturday Evening Review (1970)	65
Ted Kaczynski's Comments on Timothy McVeigh	67
Forward to Technological Slavery	71
In Defense of Violence	75
The Long-Term Outcome of Geo-Engineering	79
Morality and Revolution	81
The Coming Revolution	89
1.	91
2.	92
3.	95
4.	97
Note	98
Ted Kaczynski Letter to an Anonymous German	99
The System's Neatest Trick	109
1. What the System Is Not	111
2. How the System Exploits the Impulse to Rebel	113

3. The System's Neatest Trick	114
4. The Trick Is Not Perfect	116
5. An Example	118
 An Interview with Ted Kaczynski	 121
 Letter to a Turkish anarchist	 131
Introduction	133
Biographical	133
Rejecting civilization	134
Motivation for bombing	135
Technology and civilization	136
Violence	136
Green Anarchism	137
Primitive society	138
The romanticized vision	138
Cruelty to animals	139
Lack of gender equality	139
Time spent working	140
Violence	141
Competition	141
Conclusion	141
Green Anarchism and revolution	142
 Progress versus Liberty	 145
 Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself	 157
I.	159
II.	168
 The Communiques of Freedom Club	 171
About Freedom Club	173
Letter to San Francisco Examiner (1985)	173
Material Sent to LWOD	175
Letter to LWOD	175
Confidential note to LWOD	176
Copy of letter sent to New York Times	177
Letter to Warren Hoge of the New York Times (1995)	178
Letter to Warren Hoge (1993)	181
Letter to Scientific American	181

Letter to Richard J. Roberts	183
Letter to Phillip A. Sharp	183
Unsent letter to LWOD	183
Letter to James V. McConnell	184
Letter to Earth First! Journal	185
Letter to Tom Tyler	186
Letter to David Gelernter	187
How to hit an Exxon exec	187
 Comments on the communiques from Individualists Tending toward the Wild	 189
 The Truth About Primitive Life: A Critique of Anarchoprimitivism	 199
Concluding Note	236
List of Works Cited	237
Works Listed Alphabetically by Author's Last Name	237
Works Without Named Author	239
Periodicals	239
 Industrial Society and Its Future	 241
Introduction	243
The Psychology of Modern Leftism	244
Feelings of Inferiority	245
Oversocialization	248
The Power Process	251
Surrogate Activities	252
Autonomy	254
Sources of Social Problems	256
Disruption of the Power Process in Modern Society	259
How Some People Adjust	264
The Motives of Scientists	267
The Nature of Freedom	269

Some Principles of History	272
Industrial-Technological Society Cannot Be Reformed	274
Restriction of Freedom is Unavoidable in Industrial Society	275
The “Bad” Parts of Technology Cannot Be Separated from the “Good” Parts	278
Technology is a More Powerful Social Force than the Aspiration for Freedom	280
Simpler Social Problems Have Proved Intractable	284
Revolution is Easier than Reform	286
Control of Human Behavior	287
Human Race at a Crossroads	292
Human Suffering	294
The Future	296
Strategy	299
Two Kinds of Technology	305
The Danger of Leftism	307
Final Note	312

Afterthoughts to Technological Slavery

Ted Kaczynski

April 26, 2017

1.

Último Reducto has recently called attention to some flaws in my work. For example, in ISAIF, paragraph 69, I wrote that primitive man could accept the risk of disease stoically because “it is no one’s fault, unless it is the fault of some imaginary, impersonal demon.” Último Reducto pointed out that this often is not true, because in many primitive societies people believe that diseases are caused by witchcraft. When someone becomes sick the people will try to identify and punish the witch—a specific person—who supposedly caused the illness.

Again, in paragraph 208 I wrote, “We are aware of no significant cases of regression in small-scale technology,” but Último Reducto has pointed out some examples of regression of small-scale technology in primitive societies.

The foregoing flaws are not very important, because they do not significantly affect the main lines of my argument. But other problems pointed out by Último Reducto are more serious. Thus, in the second and third sentences of paragraph 94 of ISAIF I wrote: “Freedom means being in control...of the life-and-death issues of one’s existence: food, clothing, shelter and defense against whatever threats there may be in one’s environment. Freedom means having power...to control the circumstances of one’s own life.” But obviously people have never had such control to more than a limited extent. They have not, for example, been able to control bad weather, which in certain circumstances can lead to starvation. So what kind and degree of control do people really need? At a minimum they need to be free of “interference, manipulation or supervision...from any large organization,” as stated in the first sentence of paragraph 94. But if the second and third sentences meant no more than that, they would be redundant.

So there is a problem here in need of a solution. I’m not going to try to solve it now, however. For the present let it suffice to say that ISAIF is by no means a final and definitive statement in the field that it covers. Maybe some day I or someone else will be able to offer a clearer and more accurate treatment of the same topics.

2.

In “The Truth About Primitive Life” and in “The System’s Neatest Trick” I referred to the “politicization” of American anthropology, and I came down hard on politically correct anthropologists. See pages [144-149] and [202-203] of this book. My views on the politicization of anthropology were based on a number of books and articles I had seen and on some materials sent to me by a person who was doing graduate work in anthropology. My views were by no means based on a systematic survey or a thorough knowledge of recent anthropological literature.

One of my Spanish correspondents, the editor of *Isumatag*, argued that I was being unfair to anthropologists, and he backed up his argument by sending me copies of articles from anthropological journals; for example, Michael J. Shott, “On Recent Trends in the Anthropology of Foragers,” *Man* (N.S.), Vol. 27, No. 4, Dec., 1992, pages 843-871; and Raymond Hames, “The Ecologically Noble Savage Debate,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 36, 2007, pages 177-190.

The editor of *Isumatag* was right. As he showed me, I had greatly underestimated the number of American anthropologists who made a conscientious effort to present facts evenhandedly and without ideological bias. But even if my point about the politicization of anthropology was overstated, it still contained a significant element of truth. First, there are some anthropologists

whose work is heavily politicized. (I discussed the case of Haviland on pages [145, 202-203] of this book.) Second, some of the anthropologists' debates seem clearly to be politically motivated, even if the participants in these debates do strive to be honest and objective. Consider for example the article by Raymond Hames cited above, which reviews the anthropological controversy over whether primitive peoples were or were not good conservationists. Why should this question be the subject of so much debate among anthropologists? The reason, obviously, is that nowadays the problem of controlling the environmental damage caused by industrial society is a hot political issue. Some anthropologists are tempted to cite primitive peoples as moral examples from whom we should learn to treat our environment with respect; other anthropologists perhaps would prefer to use primitives as negative examples in order to convince us that we should rely on modern methods to regulate our environment.

Until roughly the middle of the 20th century, industrial society was extremely self-confident. Apart from a very few dissenting voices, everyone assumed that "progress" was taking us all to a better and brighter future. Even the most rebellious members of society—the Marxists—believed that the injustices of capitalism represented only a temporary phase that we had to pass through in order to arrive at a world in which the benefits of "progress" would be shared equally by everyone. Because the superiority of modern society was taken for granted, it seldom occurred to anyone to draw comparisons between modern society and primitive ones, whether for the purpose of exalting modernity or for the purpose of denigrating it.

But since the mid-20th century, industrial society has been losing its self-confidence. Thinking people are increasingly affected by doubts about whether we are on the right road, and this has led many to question the value of modernity and to react against it by idealizing primitive societies. Other people, whose sense of security is threatened by the attack on modernity, defensively exaggerate the unattractive traits of primitive cultures while denying or ignoring their attractive traits. That is why some anthropological questions that once were purely academic are now politically loaded. I realize that the foregoing two paragraphs greatly simplify a complex situation, but I nevertheless insist that industrial society's loss of self-confidence in the course of the 20th century is a real event.

3.

Disposal of Radioactive Waste. In a letter to David Skrbina dated March 17, 2005, I expressed the opinion, based on "the demonstrated unreliability of untested technological solutions," that the nuclear-waste disposal site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada likely would prove to be a failure. See page [315] of this book. It may be of interest to trace the subsequent history of the Yucca Mountain site as reported in the media.

On March 18, 2005, The Denver Post, page 4A, carried an Associated Press report by Erica Werner according to which then-recent studies had found that water seepage through the Yucca Mountain site was faster than what earlier studies had reported. The more-rapid movement of water implied a greater risk of escape of radioactive materials from the site, and there were reasons to suspect that the earlier studies had been intentionally falsified.

The Week, January 26, 2007, page 24, reported a new study: "Special new containers designed to hold nuclear waste for tens of thousands of years may begin to fall apart in just 210 years," the study found. "Researchers...had pinned their hopes on zircon, a material they thought was stable

enough to store the waste..." The scientists had based this belief on computer simulations, but they were "startled" when they discovered how alpha radiation affected the "zircon" in reality.

Zircon is a gemstone. The substance referred to in the article presumably is a ceramic called zirconia. See *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 2003, Vol. 21, article "Industrial Ceramics," pages 262-63.

On September 25, 2007, *The Denver Post*, page 2A, reported: "Engineers moved some planned structures at the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump after rock samples indicated a fault line unexpectedly ran beneath their original location..."

On March 6, 2009, *The Denver Post*, page 14A, carried an Associated Press report by H. Josef Hebert according to which the U.S. Government had abandoned the plan to store reactor waste at Yucca Mountain. This after having spent 13.5 billion dollars on the project.

So it appears that the problem of safe disposal of radioactive waste is no closer to a solution than it ever was.

4.

Why is Democracy the Dominant Political Form of the Modern World? The argument about democracy set forth in my letters to David Skrbina of October 12 and November 23, 2004 (pages [283-285] and [292-296] of this book) is incomplete and insufficiently clear, so I want to supplement that argument here.

The most important point that I wanted to make was that democracy became the dominant political form of the modern world not as the result of a decision by human beings to adopt a freer or a more humane form of government, but because of an "objective" fact, namely, the fact that in modern times democracy has been associated with the highest level of economic and technological success.

To summarize the argument of my letters to Dr. Skrbina, democratic forms of government have been tried at many times and places at least since the days of ancient Athens, but democracy did not thrive sufficiently to displace authoritarian systems, which remained the dominant political forms through the 17th century. But from the advent of the Industrial Revolution the (relatively) democratic countries, above all the English-speaking ones, were also the most successful countries economically and technologically. Because they were economically and technologically successful, they were also successful militarily. The economic, technological, and military superiority of the democracies enabled them to spread democracy forcibly at the expense of authoritarian systems. In addition, many nations voluntarily attempted to adopt democratic institutions because they believed that these institutions were the source of the economic and technological success of the democracies.

As part of my argument, I maintained that the two great military contests between the democracies and the authoritarian regimes—World Wars I and II—were decided in favor of the democracies because of the democracies' economic and technological vigor. The astute reader, however, may object that the democracies could have won World Wars I and II simply by virtue of their great preponderance in resources and in numbers of soldiers, with or without any putative superiority in economic and technological vigor.

My answer is that the democracies' preponderance in resources and numbers of soldiers was only one more expression of their economic and technological vigor. The democracies had vast

manpower, territory, industrial capacity, and sources of raw material at their disposal because they—especially the British—had built great colonial empires and had spread their language, culture, and technology, as well as their economic and political systems, over a large part of the world. The English-speaking peoples moreover had powerful navies and therefore, generally speaking, command of the sea, which enabled them to assist one another in war by transporting troops and supplies to wherever they might be needed.

Authoritarian systems either had failed to build empires of comparable size, as in the case of Germany and Japan, or else they had indeed built huge empires but had left them relatively backward and undeveloped, as in the case of Spain, Portugal, and Russia. It was during the 18th century, as the Industrial Revolution was gathering force, that authoritarian France lost to semidemocratic Britain in the struggle for colonization of North America and India. France did not achieve stable democracy until 1871, when it was too late to catch up with the British.

Germany as a whole was politically fragmented until 1871, but the most important state in Germany—authoritarian Prussia—was already a great power by 1740¹ and had access to the sea,² yet failed to build an overseas empire. Even after the unification of their country in 1871, the Germans' efforts at colonization were half-hearted at best.

Like the English-speaking peoples, the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking peoples colonized vast territories and populated them thickly, but the manpower of their territories could not have been used very effectively in a European war, because these peoples lacked the economic, technical, and organizational resources to assemble, train, and equip large armies, transport them to Europe, and keep them supplied with munitions while they were there. Moreover, they lacked the necessary command of the sea. The Russians did not need command of the sea in order to transport their men to a European battlefield, but, as pointed out on page [340] of this book, note 34, the Russians during World War II did need massive aid from the West. without which they could not have properly equipped and supplied their troops.

Thus the Allies' preponderance in resources and numbers of troops, at least during World War II, was clearly an expression of the democracies' economic and technological vigor. The democracies' superiority was a consequence not only of the size of their economies, but also of their efficiency. Notwithstanding the vaunted technical efficiency of the Germans, it is said that during World War II German productivity per man-hour was only half that of the United States, while the corresponding figure for Japan was only one fifth that of the U.S.³

Though the case may not have been as clear-cut in World War I, it does appear that there too the Allies' superiority in resources and in numbers of troops was largely an expression of the democracies' economic and technological vigor. "In munitions and other war material Britain's industrial power was greatest of all...Britain...was to prove that the strength of her banking system and the wealth distributed among a great commercial people furnished the sinews of war..."⁴

¹ Encycl. Britannica, 2003, Vol. 20, article "Germany," page 96.

² The fact that Prussia's access was to the Baltic Sea rather than directly to the Atlantic was not a terribly important factor in the 18th century, when round-the-world voyages were nothing very extraordinary; still less was it important in the 19th century, when sailing ships of advanced design, and later steamships, made voyages to all parts of the world a routine matter. Even the tiny duchy of Courland, situated at the eastern end of the Baltic, made a start at overseas colonization during the 17th century (Encycl. Britannica, 2003, Vol. 3, article "Courland," page 683), so there was certainly no physical obstacle to Prussia's doing the same in the 18th and 19th centuries.

³ John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Penguin, 1990, page 219.

⁴ B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Real War, 1914-1918*, Little, Brown and Company, 1964, page 44.

Authoritarian Russia was not a critical factor in World War I, since the Germans defeated the Russians with relative ease.

Thus it seems beyond argument that democracy became the dominant political form of the modern world as a result of the democracies' superior economic and technological vigor. It may nevertheless be questioned whether democratic government was the cause of the economic and technological vigor of the democracies. In the foregoing discussion I've relied mainly on the example of the English-speaking peoples. In fact, France, following its democratization in 1871 and even before the devastation wrought by World War I, was not economically vigorous.⁵ Was the economic and technological vigor of the English-speaking peoples perhaps the result, not of their democratic political systems, but of some other cultural trait?

For present purposes the answer to this question is not important. The objective fact is that since the advent of the Industrial Revolution democracy has been generally associated with economic and technological vigor. Whether this association has been merely a matter of chance, or whether there is a causative relation between democracy and economic and technological vigor, the fact remains that the association has existed. It is this objective fact, and not a human desire for a freer or a more humane society, that has made democracy the world's dominant political form.

It is true that some peoples have made a conscious decision to adopt democracy, but it can be shown that in modern times (at least since, say, 1800) such decisions have usually been based on a belief (correct or not) that democracy would help the peoples in question to achieve economic and technological success. But even assuming that democracy had been chosen because of a belief that it would provide a freer or a more humane form of government, and even assuming that such a belief were correct, democracy could not have thriven under conditions of industrialization in competition with authoritarian systems if it had not equalled or surpassed the latter in economic and technological vigor.

Thus we are left with the inescapable conclusion that democracy became the dominant political form of the modern world not through human choice but because of an objective fact, namely, the association of democracy, since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, with economic and technological success.

It is my opinion that we have now reached the end of the era in which democratic systems were the most vigorous ones economically and technologically. If that is true, then we can expect democracy to be gradually replaced by systems of a more authoritarian type, though the external forms of democratic government will probably be retained because of their utility for propaganda purposes.

5.

Popular Rebellion as a Force for Reform. On pages [345 note 121, 322–323] of this book I stated that in the early 20th century labor violence in the United States impelled the government to carry out reforms that alleviated the problems of the working class. This statement was based on my memory of things read many years earlier. Recent reading and rereading lead me to doubt that the statement is accurate.

⁵ Encycl. Britannica, 2003, Vol. 19, article "France," page 521.

It's true that labor violence during the 1890s seems to have spurred efforts at reform by the government and by industry between about 1896 and 1904, but the effect was short-lived.⁶ The great turning point in the struggle of the American working class was the enactment in the 1930s of legislation that guaranteed workers the right to organize and to bargain collectively, and this turning point was followed by a "sharp decline in the level of industrial violence."⁷ But I'm not aware of any evidence that the legislation was motivated by a desire to prevent labor violence.

The data support the conclusion that labor violence was damaging to labor unions and counterproductive in relation to the workers' immediate goals.⁸ On the other hand, it seems clear that labor violence could not have been ended except by addressing the grievances of the working class.⁹ Thus, the threat of violence could have impelled the government to enact legislation guaranteeing the workers' right to organize and to bargain collectively. But, again, I don't know of any evidence that this was actually what happened.

Be that as it may, we can dispense with the labor movement for present purposes. The revolt of American black people (the "civil rights movement") of the 1950s and 1960s can serve to illustrate the points I tried to make on page [345 note 121] and pages [322-323] of this book. And it's easy to give other examples of cases in which popular revolt, short of revolution, has forced governments to pay attention to people's grievances. Thus, the Wat Tyler Rebellion in England (1381) failed as a social revolution, but it impelled the government to refrain from enforcing the poll tax that was the immediate cause of the revolt.¹⁰ The Sepoy Mutiny in India (1857-58) was ruthlessly crushed, but it caused the British to drop their effort to impose westernizing social changes upon Hindu civilization.¹¹

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/ted-kaczynski-afterthoughts-to-technological-slavery/>

⁶ Foster Rhea Dulles, *Labor in America: A History*, third edition, AHM Publishing Corporation, Northbrook, Illinois, 1966, pages 166-179, 183-88, 193-99, 204-05.

⁷ Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr (editors), *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Signet Books, New York, 1969, pages 343-45, 364-65.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pages 361-62.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 364-66.

¹⁰ *Encycl. Britannica*, 2003, Vol. 9, article "Peasants' Revolt," pages 229-230.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, article "Indian Mutiny," pages 288-89.

Answer to Some Comments Made in Green Anarchist

Ted Kaczynski

I would like to comment on some statements that were made in reference to the Unabomber's manifesto in GA 40–41. In an article on pages 21–22, Anti-Authoritarians Anonymous wrote:

[A] return to undomesticated autonomous ways of living would not be achieved by the removal of industrialism alone. Such removal would still leave domination of nature, subjugation of women, war, religion, the state, and division of labour, to cite some basic social pathologies. It is civilization itself that must be undone to go where Unabomber wants to go.

I agree with much of this. But there is the question of feasibility. As was pointed out in *Industrial Society and Its Future* (ISIF), paragraphs 208–210, modern technology depends on a high level of social organization. If this social organization is sufficiently disrupted, then the technology breaks down, consequently whatever is left of the social organization collapses and we return to a pre-industrial state of society. To rebuild the technology and the corresponding form of social organization would take centuries. Because the techno-industrial system is sick and is likely to get sicker, its destruction is a goal that we can reasonably hope to attain during the next several decades.

But the removal of civilization itself is a far more difficult proposition, because civilization in its pre-industrial forms does not require an elaborate and highly-organized technological structure. A pre-industrial civilization requires only a relatively simple technology, the most important element of which is agriculture.

How does one prevent people from practicing agriculture? And given that people practice agriculture, how does one prevent them from living in densely-populated communities and forming social hierarchies? It is a very difficult matter and I don't see any way of accomplishing it.

I am not suggesting that the elimination of civilization should be abandoned as an ideal or as an *eventual* goal. I merely point out that no one knows of any plausible means of reaching that goal in the foreseeable future. In contrast, the elimination of the industrial system is a plausible goal for the next several decades, and, in a general way, we can see how to go about attaining it. Therefore, the goal on which we should set our sights for the present is the destruction of the industrial system. *After* that has been accomplished we can think about eliminating civilization.

Even if civilization cannot be eliminated, the removal of the industrial system will accomplish a great deal. (See ISIF, paragraph 184.)

First of all, large areas of the Earth are unsuitable for agriculture, and in the absence of the modern technology that makes possible mass transport of agricultural products, these areas would have to revert to a pastoral or a hunting-and-gathering economy (supplemented, no doubt, by a limited amount of trade with the agricultural areas).

Second (as was implied in ISIF, paragraphs 184, 198), modern man's domination of nature depends on his technology. Reversion to a pre-industrial technology would vastly reduce man's power to dominate nature, though it would not eliminate that power entirely.

Third, while war can exist in non-industrial societies, it is nowhere near as destructive as modern warfare.

Fourth, while the elimination of modern technology would not necessarily destroy the state, it would greatly reduce the power of the state.

Fifth, though division of labor can exist in non-industrial societies, labor is divided much less in such societies than in modern society. That is, work is far less specialized in non-industrial societies.

Thus the elimination of the industrial system, besides being a realistic goal, would be a very long step in the right direction. But if ending industrialism is a realistic goal it does not necessarily follow that that goal will be easily reached. On the contrary, it is all too likely that winning this battle will require our utmost exertions. We can't afford to stretch ourselves too thin by concerning ourselves with other goals. Instead, we must make the destruction of the industrial system the single overriding objective toward which all our efforts are directed. (ISIF, paragraph 200)

In the article "Neither Left Nor Right But Forwards," GA 40–41, pages 26–27, Shadow Fox writes that according to FC/Unabomber, "militant greens/primitivists should actively distance themselves from 'Leftist' ideologues. This inevitably will include the dinosaur ideology of class conflict.

This is answered in an unsigned article, "Greens, Get Real," in the same issue of GA, pages 27–28:

In *Industrial Society & Its Future*, class, race, gender and other oppressions are recognized, even if only as subsidiary to technocratic oppression—FC takes issue with ideological leftists that make a 'cause' of others [sic.] oppression.

It was Shadow Fox who came closest to interpreting correctly the meaning of ISIF. The struggle against the industrial system can possibly be understood as a class war, but, if so, it is not a class war of the traditional kind. In traditional class war the workers struggle against the bourgeoisie for control of the system, or to get a larger share of the material benefits that the system offers. Thus traditional class war is inconsistent with our goal, which is to *destroy* the system. Social classes in the traditional sense are irrelevant to our goal. From our point of view only two social classes are relevant: one class consists of the technocratic elite and the other class consists of everyone else. The struggle against the system could be viewed as a class war against the technocratic elite, but it is better to view it as a struggle against technology, because in viewing it as a class war we risk slipping into the illusion that what we have to get rid of is merely a particular *class of people*. Of course, if we got rid of the present technocratic elite but retained the technology, a new technocratic elite would soon arise. We must focus on the technology rather than on the social class that controls it, so that we will never forget that it is the technology itself that has to be eliminated.

In eliminating the technology we will in a sense be winning all class wars, because the elimination of modern technology will destroy the present form of social organization, so that all of the present social classes will cease to exist. This does not guarantee that no new social classes will arise later, but such classes will exist in an entirely different kind of society and the problems they present will have to be dealt with in entirely different terms.

I insist that the revolution against technology should not address issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. There are several reasons for this.

1. Even if all inequities of race, gender, etc. were eliminated, this would accomplish nothing toward the destruction of the techno-industrial system. In fact, doing away with race and gender discrimination would be *good* for the existing system because it would eliminate conflicts that interfere with the functioning of the system and would facilitate the process of integrating black people, women, etc. as obedient cogs in the social machine. Why do you think the mass media constantly feed us propaganda about equality of races, sexes, etc.? (See ISIF paragraphs 28, 29, and Note 4.)
2. Race, gender, and gay rights activism divert attention and energy from the main goal, which is once again, destruction of the techno-industrial system.
3. If you had an old car that you wanted to junk, would you start fixing it up to make it run better? If you did start fixing it up, I would have to suspect that your intention to junk it was not quite sincere. We want to junk the whole techno-industrial system, so why should we bother trying to patch up its defects? Why should we work to give black people an equal opportunity to become corporation executives or scientists when we want a world in which there will be no corporation executives or scientists? After the system has been eliminated there may well be problems of race, gender, etc., but those problems will have to be solved in the context of the new society that will then exist. Any solutions that we might arrive at now, in the context of industrial society, will become useless when industrial society no longer exists.

It would be futile to try to plan out now a non-industrial society that would be free of racism, etc. We can destroy industrial society, but we cannot predict or control the form that the new society will take. (See ISIF paragraphs 100–108.) We do not know what kind of race or gender problems may exist in the new society or what can be done about them. Those problems will have to be left to the people who will live in that society.

4. Any group or movement that makes race or gender problems an important part of its program is bound to attract many people of the psychological type that we have called “leftist.” ISIF (paragraphs 213–230) discusses at length the danger that this presents. It is essential for anti-technological revolutionaries to separate themselves rigorously from leftism.
5. People will not stop discriminating against minorities just because you preach about it. To end discrimination you would have to have some means of enforcing fair treatment. This would imply some sort of strong, widespread organization capable of carrying out the enforcement, and it is likely that such an organization would itself become tyrannical and

oppressive. Moreover, to carry out its work such an organization would need rapid, long-distance transportation and communication, hence all the technology needed to maintain the transportation and communication systems; which means in practice that it would have to retain the whole technological system. (See ISIF paragraphs 200, 201.) Thus the effort to end social injustice would make it much more difficult to dispense with technology.

After the techno-industrial system has been eliminated, people can and should fight injustice wherever they find it. But, realistically, we can never hope to end all social injustice, we can only hope to alleviate it.

Social injustice has always existed, even in some primitive societies, and the people of each society have had to deal with their particular forms of injustice as best they could. But the problem that the techno-industrial system presents us with is vastly greater and entirely new. Either the unrestrained growth of technology will lead to a disaster of magnitude unprecedented in the history of the human race, or it will permanently enslave not only the human body but the human mind and the natural world as well (see ISIF, paragraphs 143, 144, 169, 170–178). By comparison, the problem of injustice in the traditional sense shrinks into insignificance. Our objective must be not social justice but the destruction of the techno-industrial system.

—Theodore J. Kaczynski

* * *

Footnote for those who doubt that the problem of technology is incomparably greater than the age-old problem of social injustice:

I believe that artificial intelligence stands on the brink of success.

Cougals B. Lenat, *Scientific American*, September, 1995, page 80.

When the technocrats are armed with computers of superhuman intelligence, will they not be able to outsmart us at every step?

[R]obots that serve us personally in the near future...[are] not science fiction. We have the capability now—solid engineering is all that is required.

Joseph F. Engelberger, *Scientific American*, September, 1995, page 166.

Robots and intelligent computers will make human labor obsolete, so that the technocrats will no longer have any need of ordinary people to work for them. Armies and police forces of robots will be incorruptibly loyal to their masters, giving the technocrats absolute power over us.

To lengthen our lives and improve our minds, we will need to change our bodies and brains...[W]e must imagine ways in which novel replacements for worn body parts might solve our problems of failing health...Eventually, using nanotechnology, we will entirely replace our brains...The sciences needed to enact this transition are already in the making...Individuals now are conceived by chance. Someday, instead, they could be ‘composed’ in accord with considered desires and designs...Traditional

systems of ethical thought are focused mainly on individuals...Obviously, we must also consider the rights and the roles of larger-scale beings—such as the superpersons we term cultures and the great, growing systems called sciences...Will robots inherit the earth? Yes, but they will be our children.

Marvin Minsky, *Scientific American*, October, 1994, pages 109–113.

More precisely, the robots will be the children of the technocrats who create them. They won't be your children or my children.

Ralph E. Gomory, the former director of research for IBM who is now president of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation...has a suggestion for mitigating science's task: make the world more artificial. Artificial systems, Gomory states, tend to be more predictable than natural ones. For example, to simplify weather forecasting, engineers might encase the earth in a transparent dome.

Scientific American, August, 1994, page 22.

It is doubtful whether this particular scheme will ever be technically feasible, but it gives an idea of the kind of future that the technocrats have in store for us.

University of Michigan's Special Collection's Library (Labadie Collection)

This text was transcribed by Freedom Club, an anti-industrial student group at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. They can be found in Box 65 of the University of Michigan's Special Collection's Library (Labadie Collection).

Hit where it hurts

Ted Kaczynski

2002

1. The Purpose Of This Article.

The purpose of this article is to point out a very simple principle of human conflict, a principle that opponents of the techno-industrial system seem to be overlooking. The principle is that in any form of conflict, if you want to win, you must hit your adversary where it hurts.

I have to explain that when I talk about “hitting where it hurts” I am not necessarily referring to physical blows or to any other form of physical violence. For example, in oral debate, “hitting where it hurts” would mean making the arguments to which your opponents position is most vulnerable. In a presidential election, “hitting where it hurts” would mean winning from your opponent the states that have the most electoral votes. Still, in discussing this principle I will use the analogy of physical combat, because it is vivid and clear.

If a man punches you, you can’t defend yourself by hitting back at his fist, because you can’t hurt the man that way. In order to win the fight, you have to hit him where it hurts. That means you have to go behind the fist and hit the sensitive and vulnerable parts of the man’s body.

Suppose a bulldozer belonging to a logging company has been tearing up the woods near your home and you want to stop it. It is the blade of the bulldozer that rips the earth and knocks trees over, but it would be a waste of time to take a sledgehammer to the blade. If you spent a long, hard day working on the blade with the sledge, you might succeed in damaging it enough so that it became useless. But, in comparison with the rest of the bulldozer, the blade is relatively inexpensive and easy to replace. The blade is only the “fist” with which the bulldozer hits the earth. To defeat the machine you must go behind the “fist” and attack the bulldozer’s vital parts. The engine, for example, can be ruined with very little expenditure of time and effort by means well known to many radicals.

At this point I must make clear that I am not recommending that anyone should damage a bulldozer (unless it is his own property). Nor should anything in this article be interpreted as recommending illegal activity of any kind. I am a prisoner, and if I were to encourage illegal activity this article would not even be allowed to leave the prison. I use the bulldozer analogy only because it is clear and vivid and will be appreciated by radicals.

2. Technology Is The Target.

It is widely recognized that “the basic variable which determines the contemporary historic process is provided by technological development” (Celso Furtado*). Technology, above all else, is responsible for the current condition of the world and will control its future development. Thus, the “bulldozer” that we have to destroy is modern technology itself. Many radicals are aware of this, and therefore realize that their task is to eliminate the entire techno-industrial system. But unfortunately they have paid little attention to the need to hit the system where it hurts.

Smashing up McDonald’s or Starbuck’s is pointless. Not that I give a damn about McDonald’s or Starbuck’s. I don’t care whether anyone smashes them up or not. But that is not a revolutionary activity. Even if every fast-food chain in the world were wiped out the techno-industrial system would suffer only minimal harm as a result, since it could easily survive without fast-food chains. When you attack McDonald’s or Starbuck’s, you are not hitting where it hurts.

Some months ago I received a letter from a young man in Denmark who believed that the techno-industrial system had to be eliminated because, as he put it, “What will happen if we go

on this way?” Apparently, however, his form of “revolutionary” activity was raiding fur farms. As a means of weakening the techno-industrial system this activity is utterly useless. Even if animal liberationists succeed in eliminating the fur industry completely they would do no harm at all to the system, because the system can get along perfectly well without furs.

I agree that keeping wild animals in cages is intolerable, and that putting an end to such practices is a noble cause. But there are many other noble causes, such as preventing traffic accidents, providing shelter for the homeless, recycling, or helping old people cross the street. Yet no one is foolish enough to mistake these for revolutionary activities, or to imagine that they do anything to weaken the system.

3. The Timber Industry Is A Side Issue.

To take another example, no one in his right mind believes that anything like real wilderness can survive very long if the techno-industrial system continues to exist. Many environmental radicals agree that this is the case and hope for the collapse of the system. But in practice all they do is attack the timber industry.

I certainly have no objection to their attack on the timber industry. In fact, it’s an issue that is close to my heart and I’m delighted by any successes that radicals may have against the timber industry. In addition, for reasons that I need to explain here, I think that opposition to the timber industry should be one component of the efforts to overthrow the system.

But, by itself, attacking the timber industry is not an effective way of working against the system, for even in the unlikely event that radicals succeeded in stopping all logging everywhere in the world, that would not bring down the system. And it would not permanently save wilderness. Sooner or later the political climate would change and logging would resume. Even if logging never resumed, there would be other venues through which wilderness would be destroyed, or if not destroyed then tamed and domesticated. Mining and mineral exploration, acid rain, climate changes, and species extinction destroy wilderness; wilderness is tamed and domesticated through recreation, scientific study, and resource management, including among other things electronic tracking of animals, stocking of streams with hatchery-bred fish, and planting of genetically-engineered trees.

Wilderness can be saved permanently only by eliminating the techno-industrial system, and you cannot eliminate the system by attacking the timber industry. The system would easily survive the death of the timber industry because wood products, though very useful to the system, can if necessary be replaced with other materials.

Consequently, when you attack the timber industry, you are not hitting the system where it hurts. The timber industry is only the “fist” (or one of the fists) with which the system destroys wilderness, and, just as in a fist-fight, you can’t win by hitting at the fist. You have to go behind the fist and strike at the most sensitive and vital organs of the system. By legal means, of course, such as peaceful protests.

4. Why The System Is Tough.

The techno-industrial system is exceptionally tough due to its so-called “democratic” structure and its resulting flexibility. Because dictatorial systems tend to be rigid, social tensions and

resistance can be built up in them to the point where they damage and weaken the system and may lead to revolution. But in a “democratic” system, when social tension and resistance build up dangerously the system backs off enough, it compromises enough, to bring the tensions down to a safe level.

During the 1960s people first became aware that environmental pollution was a serious problem, the more so because the visible and smellable filth in the air over our major cities was beginning to make people physically uncomfortable. Enough protest arose so that an Environmental Protection Agency was established and other measures were taken to alleviate the problem. Of course, we all know that our pollution problems are a long, long way from being solved. But enough was done so that public complaints subsided and the pressure on the system was reduced for a number of years.

Thus, attacking the system is like hitting a piece of rubber. A blow with a hammer can shatter cast iron, because cast iron is rigid and brittle. But you can pound a piece of rubber without hurting it because it is flexible: It gives way before protest, just enough so that the protest loses its force and momentum. Then the system bounces back.

So, in order to hit the system where it hurts, you need to select issues on which the system will not back off, in which it will fight to the finish. For what you need is not compromise with the system but a life-and-death struggle.

5. It Is Useless To Attack The System In Terms Of Its Own Values.

It is absolutely essential to attack the system not in terms of its own technologically-oriented values, but in terms of values that are inconsistent with the values of the system. As long as you attack the system in terms of its own values, you do not hit the system where it hurts, and you allow the system to deflate protest by giving way, by backing off.

For example, if you attack the timber industry primarily on the basis that forests are needed to preserve water resources and recreational opportunities, then the system can give ground to defuse protest without compromising its own values: Water resources and recreation are fully consistent with the values of the system, and if the system backs off, if it restricts logging in the name of water resources and recreation, then it only makes a tactical retreat and does not suffer a strategic defeat for its code of values.

If you push victimization issues (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, or poverty) you are not challenging the system’s values and you are not even forcing the system to back off or compromise. You are directly helping the system. All of the wisest proponents of the system recognize that racism, sexism, homophobia, and poverty are harmful to the system, and this is why the system itself works to combat these and similar forms of victimization.

“Sweatshops,” with their low pay and wretched working conditions, may bring profit to certain corporations, but wise proponents of the system know very well that the system as a whole functions better when workers are treated decently. In making an issue of sweatshops, you are helping the system, not weakening it.

Many radicals fall into the temptation of focusing on non-essential issues like racism, sexism and sweatshops because it is easy. They pick an issue on which the system can afford a compromise and on which they will get support from people like Ralph Nader, Winona La Duke, the labor unions, and all the other pink reformers. Perhaps the system, under pressure, will back off

a bit, the activists will see some visible result from their efforts, and they will have the satisfying illusion that they have accomplished something. But in reality they have accomplished nothing at all toward eliminating the techno-industrial system.

The globalization issue is not completely irrelevant to the technology problem. The package of economic and political measures termed “globalization” does promote economic growth and, consequently, technological progress. Still, globalization is an issue of marginal importance and not a well-chosen target of revolutionaries. The system can afford to give ground on the globalization issue. Without giving up globalization as such, the system can take steps to mitigate the negative environmental and economic consequences of globalization so as to defuse protest. At a pinch, the system could even afford to give up globalization altogether. Growth and progress would still continue, only at a slightly lower rate. And when you fight globalization you are not attacking the system’s fundamental values. Opposition to globalization is motivated in terms of securing decent wages for workers and protecting the environment, both of which are completely consistent with the values of the system. (The system, for its own survival, can’t afford to let environmental degradation go too far.) Consequently, in fighting globalization you do not hit the system where it really hurts. Your efforts may promote reform, but they are useless for the purpose of overthrowing the techno-industrial system.

6. Radicals Must Attack The System At The Decisive Points.

To work effectively toward the elimination of the techno-industrial system, revolutionaries must attack the system at points at which it cannot afford to give ground. They must attack the vital organs of the system. Of course, when I use the word “attack,” I am not referring to physical attack but only to legal forms of protest and resistance.

Some examples of vital organs of the system are:

- A. The electric-power industry. The system is utterly dependent on its electric-power grid.
- B. The communications industry. Without rapid communications, as by telephone, radio, television, e-mail, and so forth, the system could not survive.
- C. The computer industry. We all know that without computers the system would promptly collapse.
- D. The propaganda industry. The propaganda industry includes the entertainment industry, the educational system, journalism, advertising, public relations, and much of politics and of the mental-health industry. The system can’t function unless people are sufficiently docile and conforming and have the attitudes that the system needs them to have. It is the function of the propaganda industry to teach people that kind of thought and behavior.
- E. The biotechnology industry. The system is not yet (as far as I know) physically dependent on advanced biotechnology. Nevertheless, the system cannot afford to give way on the biotechnology issue, which is a critically important issue for the system, as I will argue in a moment.

Again: When you attack these vital organs of the system, it is essential not to attack them in terms of the system’s own values but in terms of values inconsistent with those of the system. For

example, if you attack the electric-power industry on the basis that it pollutes the environment, the system can defuse protest by developing cleaner methods of generating electricity. If worse came to worse, the system could even switch entirely to wind and solar power. This might do a great deal to reduce environmental damage, but it would not put an end to the techno-industrial system. Nor would it represent a defeat for the system's fundamental values. To accomplish anything against the system you have to attack all electric-power generation as a matter of principle, on the ground that dependence on electricity makes people dependent on the system. This is a ground incompatible with the system's values.

7. Biotechnology May Be The Best Target For Political Attack.

Probably the most promising target for political attack is the biotechnology industry. Though revolutions are generally carried out by minorities, it is very useful to have some degree of support, sympathy, or at least acquiescence from the general population. To get that kind of support or acquiescence is one of the goals of political action. If you concentrated your political attack on, for example, the electric-power industry, it would be extremely difficult to get any support outside of a radical minority, because most people resist change to their way of living, especially any change that inconveniences them. For this reason, few would be willing to give up electricity.

But people do not yet feel themselves dependent on advanced biotechnology as they do on electricity. Eliminating biotechnology will not radically change their lives. On the contrary, it would be possible to show people that the continued development of biotechnology will transform their way of life and wipe out age-old human values. Thus, in challenging biotechnology, radicals should be able to mobilize in their own favor the natural human resistance to change.

And biotechnology is an issue on which the system cannot afford to lose. It is an issue on which the system will have to fight to the finish, which is exactly what we need. But — to repeat once more — it is essential to attack biotechnology not in terms of the system's own values but in terms of values inconsistent with those of the system. For example, if you attack biotechnology, primarily on the basis that it may damage the environment, or that genetically-modified foods may be harmful to health, then the system can and will cushion your attack by giving ground or compromising — for instance, by introducing increased supervision of genetic research and more rigorous testing and regulation of genetically-modified crops. People's anxiety will then subside and protest wither.

8. All Biotechnology Must Be Attacked As A Matter Of Principle.

So, instead of protesting one or another negative consequence of biotechnology, you have to attack all modern biotechnology on principle, on grounds such as (a) that it is an insult to all living things; (b) that it puts too much power in the hands of the system; (c) that it will radically transform fundamental human values that have existed for thousands of years; and similar grounds that are inconsistent with the values of the system.

In response to this kind of attack the system will have to stand and fight. It cannot afford to cushion your attack by backing off to any great extent, because biotechnology is too central to the whole enterprise of technological progress, and because in backing off the system would not be making only a tactical retreat, but would be taking a major strategic defeat to its code of

values. Those values would be undermined and the door would be opened to further political attacks that would hack away at the foundations of the system.

Now it's true that the U.S. House of Representatives recently voted to ban cloning of human beings, and at least some congressmen even gave the right kinds of reasons for doing so. The reasons I read about were framed in religious terms, but whatever you may think of the religious terms involved, these reasons were not technologically acceptable reasons. And that is what counts.

Thus, the congressmen's vote on human cloning was a genuine defeat for the system. But it was only a very, very small defeat, because of the narrow scope of the ban — only one tiny part of biotechnology was affected — and because for the near future cloning of human beings would be of little practical use to the system anyway. But the House of Representatives' action does suggest that this may be a point at which the system is vulnerable, and that a broader attack on all of biotechnology might inflict severe damage on the system and its values.

9. Radicals Are Not Yet Attacking Biotech Effectively.

Some radicals do attack the biotechnology, whether politically or physically, but as far as I know they explain their opposition to biotech in terms of the system's own values. That is, their main complaints are the risks of environmental damage and of harm to health.

And they are not hitting the biotech industry where it hurts. To use an analogy of physical combat once again, suppose you had to defend yourself against a giant octopus. You would not be able to fight back effectively by hacking at the tips of its tentacles. You have to strike at its head. From what I've read of their activities, radicals who work against biotechnology still do no more than hack at the tips of the octopus's tentacles. They try to persuade ordinary farmers, individually, to refrain from planting genetically-engineered seed. But there are many thousands of farms in America, so that persuading farmers individually is an extremely inefficient way to combat genetic engineering. It would be much more effective to persuade research scientists engaged in biotechnological work, or executives of companies like Monsanto, to leave the biotech industry. Good research scientists are people who have special talents and extensive training, so they are difficult to replace. The same is true of top corporate executives. Persuading just a few of these people to get out of biotech would do more damage to the biotechnology industry than persuading a thousand farmers not to plant genetically-engineered seed.

10. Hit Where It Hurts.

It is open to argument whether I am right in thinking that biotechnology is the best issue on which to attack the system politically. But it is beyond argument that radicals today are wasting much of their energy on issues that have little or no relevance to the survival of the technological system. And even when they do address the right issues, radicals do not hit where it hurts. So instead of trotting off to the next world trade summit to have temper tantrums over globalization, radicals ought to put in some time thinking how to hit the system where it really hurts. By legal means, of course.

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Green Anarchy #8, Spring 2002

How I Blew Up Harold Snilly

Apios Tuberosa (pseud. Ted Kaczynski)

When I was in highschool I took a course in chemistry. There was only one aspect of the subject which interested me, as any chemist could have seen from a brief inspection of my rather specialized home collection of reagents: powdered aluminum, powdered magnesium, powdered zinc, sulfure, potassium nitrate, potassium permanganate...in suitable combinations, these things are capable of exploding.

One day in the laboratory, having finished my assigned experiment early, I thought I might as well spend the extra time pursuing my favorite line of research. On theoretical grounds, a mixture of red phosphorus and potassium chlorate seemed promising. (I did not know at the time that it is the red phosphorus in the scratching surface of a match-book, together with the potassium chlorate in the match-head, that makes a match light so readily. I later found that the mixture is extremely sensitive to friction and practically impossible to work with. The read is advised not to play with it.) Taking a minute quantity of each of these substances from my collection of reagents, I carefully mixed them, and applied them, with the tip of a spatula, to a bunsen-burner flame. The result was a small but promising POP.

Now, at the table behind me was seated an individual by the name of Harold Snilly (the name is fictitious, of course), who was more noted for irresponsibility than for intelligence. It happened that my experiment came to his attention. His interest was immediately and intensely aroused, and naturally he asked me the ingredients of the mixture. I would like to make it clear to any of my old schoolmates who may read this that, contrary to the rumors current at the time, my sole error and sole guilt in the matter lay in the fact that I civilly and truthfully answered Harold Snilly's question.

To the adolescent mind, there is a vague aura of romance and excitement about chemistry, an indefinite vision of dramatic reactions, fireworks, explosions. Perhaps it was this that led Harold Snilly to take chemistry, and perhaps he had been disappointed to find that the course was mostly drab routine, as with any other highschool subject. At any rate, his enthusiasm now knew no bounds. He immediately poured half a vial of red phosphorus and half a vial of potassium chlorate onto a sheet of paper and began mixing them vigorously. Some of us who had had a little experience with this sort of mischief expostulated with him; pointed out to him the folly of conducting this kind of experiment in the classroom; suggested that, if he **must** do so, then at least he should not use so **much** of the stuff. But he was intent on his work, with a bright, happy face and excited eyes, and he did not answer or even seem to hear our warnings. One was reminded of Toad in *Wind in the Willows*, sitting entranced in the middle of the road

muttering "Poop-poop", oblivious to everything but the vision of the retreating motor-car on which his glazed eyes were fixed. In the chemicals before him on the table, Harold Snilly saw the beautiful flower of fresh new experience, of freedom, of adventure.

Harold Snilly began rolling his chemicals up tightly in the sheet of paper. Seeing that all argument was in vain, I washed my hands of the matter and turned my back. About two seconds later there was an ear-shattering report. I turned around, and there stood Harold Snilly, rubbing his singed palms together, with a strange perplexed and faintly reproachful expression on his face. The beautiful flower had suddenly turned to ashes in his hands—very suddenly and very literally turned to ashes. Our teacher, Mr. Bland, came running out of the supply room where he had been busy, and hauled off Harold Snilly, first to the school nurse (unfortunately he had sustained no significant injury) and then to the chamber of inquisition.

After interrogating Harold Snilly, and extracting from him...who knows what truths or falsehoods? Mr. Bland returned grim-faced to the classroom, stalked up to my table, and asked me what I knew of the matter. I told him, and was in my turn marched off to the inquisitorial chamber. The upshot was that I was suspended from the chemistry lab for two weeks and Harold Snilly was kicked out of the class altogether. I thought it a little unfair that I should be punished for Harold Snilly's misdeed. Still, I was not very displeased at being relieved from two weeks of laboratory work.

Whether it was the result of Harold Snilly's reluctance to ascribe his misfortune to his own foolishness, or simply due to the general laws according to which rumor operates, I was somehow credited among all of the student body and some of the teachers with the lion's share of responsibility for the affair. In popular imagination, I was the mad scientist and Harold Snilly my innocent victim.

My physics teacher was one of those rare teachers with a genuine and spontaneous sense of humor. At the end of the school year I was presented with a rather tawdry award (sponsored by some corporation) for having supposedly been the best science student in the school. When my physics teacher handed me the medal, he informed me that "We decided to give you this for trying to blow up Harold Snilly." Harold Snilly was in some quarters regarded as a pest.

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<http://thejournal.link/staff/~johnfjacobi/misc/harold-snilly/>

This text was transcribed by Freedom Club, an anti-industrial student group at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Littering Ape

Apios Tuberosa (pseud. Ted Kaczynski)

A number of anthropologically inclined individuals have in recent years gained fame and fortune by authoring books of the "Naked Ape" genre. These writers, by explaining human behavior in terms of territorial imperative, dominance rankings, and other instincts originating before the dawn of Paleolithic times, have succeeded in attaching an aura of romance to our most mundane actions. Nowadays, when a man makes love to his wife, he is no longer just a man making love to his wife; he is a muscular, aggressive cavemen enacting a savage rite inherited from the misty past. When a junior executive bosses a subordinate, he is proving his virility by reinforcing his position in the dominance hierarchy; and when he attends a business conference, he can envision himself and his associates as a pack of skin-clad Neanderthals [...] on their muscular haunches about a campfire, planning a hunt.

However, one aspect of human instinctual behavior, of particular importance in these pollution-conscious times, seems to have been overlooked. Despite extensive propaganda campaigns and the ubiquitous presence of very convenient waste receptacles, the authorities still have not succeeded in inducing people to stop littering. The reason is that they have not grasped the psychological and anthropological roots of the problem. Why *do* people litter?

Animals subject to the territorial imperative must have means of making out the bounds of their territories. With most animals, this is accomplished through deposition of excreta—which is why we see dogs going from one tree to another, leaving a calling card at each. Many wild animals do the same thing. As they have a keen sense of smell, they can readily recognize the signatures of other animals and so avoid trespassing. But man, depending basically on sight rather than on sense of smell, has had to find visual means of leaving his signature. We used to carve our initials on tress; but trees are scarce in our cities now, and we aren't allowed to carve them up any more. So what do we do? We strew cigarette packages and gum wrappers. It's our way of saying "Kilroy was here."

The instinctual origins of the problem being clear, the solution becomes obvious. People refuse to deposit their litter on the trash receptacles because the receptacles *conceal* their litter. It is therefore an imperative condition of social progress that we erect posts (analogous to the "scent posts" of animals) provided with spikes or hooks on which litter can be impaled in such a manner as to be conspicuously displayed. When decorated to capacity, these posts can be carted off to the city dump, and the litter problem will be fully solved.

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This text was transcribed by Freedom Club, an anti-industrial student group at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Marcos Loves Modernization

Ted Kaczynski

I see from *Green Anarchy* No.6, page 7, that Jesús Sepúlveda says the Zapatistas are resisting modernization. If that's true, then they had better get rid of Subcomandante Marcos, ¡muy pronto! The good Subcomandante is no opponent of modernization. Here are some quotes from a speech that he gave during the Zapatistas' recent march on Mexico City:

"If we don't already have enough money for medicine, now they will be taking another bit out of our wages ...

"The economic packages ... mean nothing to us but more taxes, price increases, salary reductions, more unemployment, fewer work benefits, lower budgets for education, less housing, fewer services, less food, fewer lands, fewer hospitals, fewer doctors, less medicine.

"...[O]n what used to be our land, we put up airports for the new bosses. But we will never travel in a plane. Similarly, we build highways, and we will never have an automobile. We build entertainment centers, and we will never have access to them. We put up shopping centers, and we will never have money to shop in them. We build urban zones with all the services, and we will only see them from afar. We erect modern hotels, and we will never stay in them.

"In short, we are putting up a world which excludes us.

"You made the house, you put in the electricity, the water, the plumbing. You paved the street. You planted the garden. You built the furniture. You painted the walls. You set the tables. You got the food. You prepared the meal.

"And you are left outside. Because someone else came in and occupied the house.

"Someone else is the one whose life is illuminated. Someone else is the one who cleans himself up; the one who goes in the vehicle; the one who uses the furniture; the one who enjoys our work; the one who is fed...

"The one which has the light, prosperity, progress, joy, hope is theirs, those who, being few, have everything.

"The street and the countryside are for us. They call our destitution home.

"You will leave school and you will find there are no jobs, and if there are any, they are poorly paid. Graduating from a public school is good for nothing but third-rate employment"

(From a speech by Subcomandante Marcos at National Polytechnic Institute, Zacotenco, Mexico, March, 2001, as quoted in English translation in Food & Water Journal, Summer, 2001, pages 24-27.)

It's clear what Subcomandante Marcos is driving at, and it isn't an end to modernity. He just wants the poor people to have their fair share of the technological pie. Undoubtedly, poor people do deserve their share of the pie—if you accept that the pie should exist at all. But if you don't believe that there should be any electricity, plumbing, modern medicine, schools, or jobs, then it makes no sense to say that poor people ought to have a share of these things.

It's an old, sad, often-repeated story: True and genuine popular rebellion is taken over by sophisticated leftist intellectuals—in this case Subcomandante Marx, I mean Marcos, and his cronies—who manipulate it, betray it, and pervert it to their own ends. The leftists have done this again and again. When will people ever learn? When will you, green anarchists, ever learn?

http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC510_scans/APLAN_Anarchist/510.green.a

This text was transcribed by the editorial team of The Wildernist, an anti-industrial conservation magazine.

Ship of Fools

Ted Kaczynski

Once upon a time, the captain and the mates of a ship grew so vain of their seamanship, so full of hubris and so impressed with themselves, that they went mad. They turned the ship north and sailed until they met with icebergs and dangerous floes, and they kept sailing north into more and more perilous waters, solely in order to give themselves opportunities to perform ever-more-brilliant feats of seamanship.

As the ship reached higher and higher latitudes, the passengers and crew became increasingly uncomfortable. They began quarreling among themselves and complaining of the conditions under which they lived.

"Shiver me timbers," said an able seaman, "if this ain't the worst voyage I've ever been on. The deck is slick with ice; when I'm on lookout the wind cuts through me jacket like a knife; every time I reef the foresail I blamed-near freeze me fingers; and all I get for it is a miserable five shillings a month!"

"You think you have it bad!" said a lady passenger. "I can't sleep at night for the cold. Ladies on this ship don't get as many blankets as the men. It isn't fair!"

A Mexican sailor chimed in: "¡Chingado! I'm only getting half the wages of the Anglo seamen. We need plenty of food to keep us warm in this climate, and I'm not getting my share; the Anglos get more. And the worst of it is that the mates always give me orders in English instead of Spanish."

"I have more reason to complain than anybody," said an American Indian sailor. "If the pale-faces hadn't robbed me of my ancestral lands, I wouldn't even be on this ship, here among the icebergs and arctic winds. I would just be paddling a canoe on a nice, placid lake. I deserve compensation. At the very least, the captain should let me run a crap game so that I can make some money."

The bosun spoke up: "Yesterday the first mate called me a 'fruit' just because I suck cocks. I have a right to suck cocks without being called names for it!"

It's not only humans who are mistreated on this ship," interjected an animal-lover among the passengers, her voice quivering with indignation. "Why, last week I saw the second mate kick the ship's dog twice!"

One of the passengers was a college professor. Wringing his hands he exclaimed,

"All this is just awful! It's immoral! It's racism, sexism, speciesism, homophobia, and exploitation of the working class! It's discrimination! We must have social justice: Equal wages for the

Mexican sailor, higher wages for all sailors, compensation for the Indian, equal blankets for the ladies, a guaranteed right to suck cocks, and no more kicking the dog!”

“Yes, yes!” shouted the passengers. “Aye-aye!” shouted the crew. “It’s discrimination! We have to demand our rights!”

The cabin boy cleared his throat.

“Ahem. You all have good reasons to complain. But it seems to me that what we really have to do is get this ship turned around and headed back south, because if we keep going north we’re sure to be wrecked sooner or later, and then your wages, your blankets, and your right to suck cocks won’t do you any good, because we’ll all drown.”

But no one paid any attention to him, because he was only the cabin boy.

The captain and the mates, from their station on the poop deck, had been watching and listening. Now they smiled and winked at one another, and at a gesture from the captain the third mate came down from the poop deck, sauntered over to where the passengers and crew were gathered, and shouldered his way in amongst them. He put a very serious expression on his face and spoke thusly:

“We officers have to admit that some really inexcusable things have been happening on this ship. We hadn’t realized how bad the situation was until we heard your complaints. We are men of good will and want to do right by you. But — well — the captain is rather conservative and set in his ways, and may have to be prodded a bit before he’ll make any substantial changes. My personal opinion is that if you protest vigorously — but always peacefully and without violating any of the ship’s rules — you would shake the captain out of his inertia and force him to address the problems of which you so justly complain.”

Having said this, the third mate headed back toward the poop deck. As he went, the passengers and crew called after him, “Moderate! Reformer! Goody-liberal! Captain’s stooge!” But they nevertheless did as he said. They gathered in a body before the poop deck, shouted insults at the officers, and demanded their rights: “I want higher wages and better working conditions,” cried the able seaman. “Equal blankets for women,” cried the lady passenger. “I want to receive my orders in Spanish,” cried the Mexican sailor. “I want the right to run a crap game,” cried the Indian sailor. “I don’t want to be called a fruit,” cried the bosun. “No more kicking the dog,” cried the animal lover. “Revolution now,” cried the professor.

The captain and the mates huddled together and conferred for several minutes, winking, nodding and smiling at one another all the while. Then the captain stepped to the front of the poop deck and, with a great show of benevolence, announced that the able seaman’s wages would be raised to six shillings a month; the Mexican sailor’s wages would be raised to two-thirds the wages of an Anglo seaman, and the order to reef the foresail would be given in Spanish; lady passengers would receive one more blanket; the Indian sailor would be allowed to run a crap game on Saturday nights; the bosun wouldn’t be called a fruit as long as he kept his cocksucking strictly private; and the dog wouldn’t be kicked unless he did something really naughty, such as stealing food from the galley.

The passengers and crew celebrated these concessions as a great victory, but the next morning, they were again feeling dissatisfied.

“Six shillings a month is a pittance, and I still freeze me fingers when I reef the foresail,” grumbled the able seaman. “I’m still not getting the same wages as the Anglos, or enough food for this climate,” said the Mexican sailor. “We women still don’t have enough blankets to keep us

warm,” said the lady passenger. The other crewmen and passengers voiced similar complaints, and the professor egged them on.

When they were done, the cabin boy spoke up — louder this time so that the others could not easily ignore him:

“It’s really terrible that the dog gets kicked for stealing a bit of bread from the galley, and that women don’t have equal blankets, and that the able seaman gets his fingers frozen; and I don’t see why the bosun shouldn’t suck cocks if he wants to. But look how thick the icebergs are now, and how the wind blows harder and harder! We’ve got to turn this ship back toward the south, because if we keep going north we’ll be wrecked and drowned.”

“Oh yes,” said the bosun, “It’s just so awful that we keep heading north. But why should I have to keep cocksucking in the closet? Why should I be called a fruit? Ain’t I as good as everyone else?”

“Sailing north is terrible,” said the lady passenger. “But don’t you see? That’s exactly why women need more blankets to keep them warm. I demand equal blankets for women now!”

“It’s quite true,” said the professor, “that sailing to the north imposes great hardships on all of us. But changing course toward the south would be unrealistic. You can’t turn back the clock. We must find a mature way of dealing with the situation.”

“Look,” said the cabin boy, “If we let those four madmen up on the poop deck have their way, we’ll all be drowned. If we ever get the ship out of danger, then we can worry about working conditions, blankets for women, and the right to suck cocks. But first we’ve got to get this vessel turned around. If a few of us get together, make a plan, and show some courage, we can save ourselves. It wouldn’t take many of us — six or eight would do. We could charge the poop, chuck those lunatics overboard, and turn the ship to the south.”

The professor elevated his nose and said sternly, “I don’t believe in violence. It’s immoral.”

“It’s unethical ever to use violence,” said the bosun.

“I’m terrified of violence,” said the lady passenger.

The captain and the mates had been watching and listening all the while. At a signal from the captain, the third mate stepped down to the main deck. He went about among the passengers and crew, telling them that there were still many problems on the ship.

“We have made much progress,” he said, “But much remains to be done. Working conditions for the able seaman are still hard, the Mexican still isn’t getting the same wages as the Anglos, the women still don’t have quite as many blankets as the men, the Indian’s Saturday-night crap game is a paltry compensation for his lost lands, it’s unfair to the bosun that he has to keep his cocksucking in the closet, and the dog still gets kicked at times.

“I think the captain needs to be prodded again. It would help if you all would put on another protest — as long as it remains nonviolent.”

As the third mate walked back toward the stern, the passengers and the crew shouted insults after him, but they nevertheless did what he said and gathered in front of the poop deck for another protest. They ranted and raved and brandished their fists, and they even threw a rotten egg at the captain (which he skillfully dodged).

After hearing their complaints, the captain and the mates huddled for a conference, during which they winked and grinned broadly at one another. Then the captain stepped to the front of the poop deck and announced that the able seaman would be given gloves to keep his fingers warm, the Mexican sailor would receive wages equal to three-fourths the wages of an Anglo seaman, the women would receive yet another blanket, the Indian sailor could run a crap game

on Saturday and Sunday nights, the bosun would be allowed to suck cocks publicly after dark, and no one could kick the dog without special permission from the captain.

The passengers and crew were ecstatic over this great revolutionary victory, but by the next morning they were again feeling dissatisfied and began grumbling about the same old hardships.

The cabin boy this time was getting angry.

"You damn fools!" he shouted. "Don't you see what the captain and the mates are doing? They're keeping you occupied with your trivial grievances about blankets and wages and the dog being kicked so that you won't think about what is really wrong with this ship — that it's getting farther and farther to the north and we're all going to be drowned. If just a few of you would come to your senses, get together, and charge the poop deck, we could turn this ship around and save ourselves. But all you do is whine about petty little issues like working conditions and crap games and the right to suck cocks."

The passengers and the crew were incensed.

"Petty!!" cried the Mexican, "Do you think it's reasonable that I get only three-fourths the wages of an Anglo sailor? Is that petty?"

"How can you call my grievance trivial?" shouted the bosun. "Don't you know how humiliating it is to be called a fruit?"

"Kicking the dog is not a 'petty little issue!'" screamed the animal-lover. "It's heartless, cruel, and brutal!"

"Alright then," answered the cabin boy. "These issues are not petty and trivial. Kicking the dog is cruel and brutal and it is humiliating to be called a fruit. But in comparison to our real problem — in comparison to the fact that the ship is still heading north — your grievances are petty and trivial, because if we don't get this ship turned around soon, we're all going to drown."

"Fascist!" said the professor.

"Counterrevolutionary!" said the lady passenger. And all of the passengers and crew chimed in one after another, calling the cabin boy a fascist and a counterrevolutionary. They pushed him away and went back to grumbling about wages, and about blankets for women, and about the right to suck cocks, and about how the dog was treated. The ship kept sailing north, and after a while it was crushed between two icebergs and everyone drowned.

Retrieved on August 2, 2009 from bigoil.gnn.tv and on December 10, 2010 from www.sacredfools.org

Ted Kaczynski's Interview with the John Jay Sentinel

Ted Kaczynski

April 26, 2017

*1. Theodore Kaczynski (Unabomber) Answers Questions About His Book And Society

Theodore Kaczynski (UNABOMBER) is serving time in Florence, Colorado's maximum state prison for bombings in America that began in 1978 and ended with his arrest on April 6, 1996. He claims that his reason for doing this is to get the worlds attention so that his anti technological manifesto (Industrial Society and its Future) could be read. In 2010 his collected essays and his manifesto were published under the title Technological Slavery.

Below is an exclusive question and answer interview with him conducted through mail.

In paragraph 28 of Industrial Society and it's Future (ISAIF) you write that "the duty of society to take care of the individual" are "deeply rooted values of our society." If by our society you mean America, then doesn't capitalism argue against taking care of the individual?

In paragraph 28 of ISAIF I said that "the duty of the individual to serve society and the duty of society to take care of the individual" are deeply rooted values of modern society. You ask how this statement can be reconciled with the existence of capitalism.

Actually such a reconciliation is not very difficult. But one has to remember that social phenomena are so complex that one can seldom make statements about them that are strictly accurate. One can try to improve the accuracy of one's statements by adding reservations, qualifications, exception, explanations..., but for practical reasons this can be carried only so far. (See ISAIF, paragraph 231.) Consequently, what one says about a society usually is only a rough approximation to the truth. It's not surprising, therefore, that my statement about "deeply rooted value" can use some clarification.

Probably any historian would agree with the statement that Christian piety was a deeply rooted value in Europe during the Middle Ages, even though in those days most people (including probably the majority of the clergy) often behaved in ways that were hardly compatible with Christian piety. Similarly, when I said that "the duty of the individual to serve society and the duty of society to take care of the individual" were deeply rooted values today, I didn't mean to say that most people or most organizations actually behaved consistently in accord with those values. I did mean that those values are continually inculcated by the mainstream media and in

the schools and that they seldom are openly challenged; they are values that most believe in at some half-conscious; and they are values that are commonly used to justify the activities of large organizations.

Of course, today's corporations are out for money and power, but the asserted justification for their activities is that economic competition generated wealth for the whole society. In other words, it is claimed that by taking care of themselves the corporations are helping to take care of everyone. (And in a materialistic sense this is true in the short run, since capitalist economies do provide what is called a "higher standard of living" than socialist economies do.) Corporations are expected to take care of their employees by providing them with medical insurance, pensions and so forth. Corporations may spend or donate money for projects that bring them no direct profit but supposedly benefit the public (though of course the corporations' real purpose is to benefit themselves by improving their public image). And when a capitalist like John D. Rockefeller or Bill Gates becomes so rich that he gets bored with making money, he commonly turns to "philanthropy", i.e., spending money to take care of people.

So the existence of capitalism is by no means inconsistent with my contention that "taking care of people" and so forth is a deeply rooted value of our society.

Capitalism encourages individuals and or organizations to try and defeat one another in the market place. One main tactic of achieving this goal is by inventing superior technology as a way of gaining the upper hand against ones competitor. If you agree with this statement than do you think capitalism helps technologies domination over mankind more than any other form of government? And would it be worthwhile to spend time on trying to destroy capitalism?

You correctly point out that economic competition under capitalism encourages the development of technology, because superior technology confers a competitive advantage on those who possess it. You then ask whether I think capitalism promotes the dominance of technology more than other economic systems do. Yes, I do think that. Finally, you ask whether it would be worthwhile to spend time and effort on destroying capitalism. No, I don't think it would be worthwhile, and I'll explain why. One could to some degree retard technologies progress by eliminating or reducing any one of a number of things; to mention just three examples, capitalism, globalization, and centralization.

"Capitalism" (as it's called, maybe not quite accurately) is at present the economic system that is most conducive to technological development, so if you could get rid of capitalism you would slow technological progress to some extent. Globalization contributes to economic and technological efficiency because there are obvious advantages to a system in which natural, human, and technical resources can be freely transferred from any one part of the world to any other part where they may be needed. So if you could do away with globalization and isolate each region of the world economically from all the others, technological progress would be significantly slowed. Capitalization too is important to technological progress. For example, in order to keep the U.S. economy functioning adequately there has to be some central authority to regulate banking, print money, and so forth, otherwise the U.S. would experience the same difficulties as did Germany prior to its unification in 1867-1871. Earlier, German economic development had been significantly retarded by a lack of centralization; that is, by the fact that much of Germany was divided into numerous small states, each of which had its own banking laws, its own currency, its own weight and measures, and so forth. For this and many other reasons, if you could somehow

get rid of all centralization, then economic growth and technological progress would be seriously impeded.

So why not attack centralization? First, for reasons that I'll mention in a moment, it would be exceedingly difficult to attack centralization successfully. A movement would have to concentrate all its energy on that attack, and even if it could succeed substantially reducing centralization it would not thereby put an end to modern technology, it would only slow technological progress to a certain extent. In other words, the movement would use its energy inefficiently: a vast amount of energy would be expended in the hope of only a very modest gain.

Worse still, by concentrating its energy on the campaign against centralization, the movement would distract attention (its own and other people's) from the real objective, which is to get rid of modern technology itself.

Furthermore, I maintain that an attack on centralization could not be successful. Of course, there is no special difficulty about decentralizing in situations where centralization has proven to be technologically and economically inefficient. (E.g., excessive centralized control over economic activity, otherwise known as socialism, has largely died out due to its inefficiency.) But where centralization promotes efficiency, most people will stubbornly oppose decentralization. For example, if you wanted to let each state of the Union print its own currency independently of all the other states, your proposal would be dismissed as ridiculous. Even if you somehow succeeded in putting such a measure into effect, the negative consequences—monetary chaos and so forth—would outrage so many people that centralized control over currency would soon be reinstated.

In fact, under modern conditions the trend toward centralization is an inevitable consequence of the principle of natural selection (see *Technological Slavery*, pages 280-85): Systems that are more centralized (in areas where centralization contributes to efficiency) thrive better than those systems that are less centralized; hence, the former tend to expand at the expense of the latter. Needless to say, if future developments should ever make centralization economically and technologically inefficient, it will be relatively easy to decentralize; but then your attack on centralization will be promoting technological progress rather than retarding it. In either case, attacking centralization is not an effective way of resisting technological progress.

Arguments very similar to the foregoing ones apply to any effort to eliminate capitalism. To have any hope of eliminating capitalism a movement would have to concentrate all its energy on that task, and even if it succeeded in eliminating capitalism the gain would be very modest, because technological progress would continue, though at a somewhat slower rate. (Despite the absence of capitalism in the Soviet Union, that country was by no means a negligible force technologically. We all know that the Soviet Union was the first country to put an artificial satellite into orbit; and the Soviets developed the world's first successful jet airliner, Tu-104.)

Thus, an antitechnological movement that focused on the elimination of capitalism would expend vast energy in return for very little gain. What is worse, by focusing on capitalism the movement would distract its own and other people's attention from the real objective, which is to get rid of modern technology itself.

Furthermore, people would obstinately resist the loss of economic efficiency entailed by the replacement of capitalism with socialism. And even if you could somehow replace capitalism with socialism, capitalism would soon reappear and become dominant because it is economically and technologically more vigorous than socialism. This again is guaranteed by the principle of natural selection (*Technological Slavery*, pages 280-85) and is confirmed by experience: When

the socialist countries of eastern Europe couldn't keep up with the West economically or technologically, they reverted to capitalism. Sweden once was ideologically socialist, but in practical terms socialism never actually got very far in that country, and Sweden today is still capitalist. While remaining nominally socialist, China for the sake of economic growth now allows a good deal of private enterprise (i.e., capitalism) in its economy. Venezuela's dictator, Hugo Chavez, talks about socialism, but in practice he leaves most of the country's economy in the hands of private enterprise because he doesn't want the drastic decline in economic efficiency that would result from the elimination of capitalism. I know of only two countries left in the world that are left of capitalism: Cuba and North Korea. No one wants to imitate Cuba and North Korea, because they are (from a materialistic point of view) economic failures.

So, as long as we live in a technological world, there's no way we will get rid of capitalism unless and until it is superseded by some system that is economically and technologically more efficient.

The arguments I've outlined here in reference to centralization and capitalism are equally applicable to globalization, bureaucracy, environmental destructiveness, or any one of numerous other evils the elimination of which would merely impair the functioning of the technological system without actually eliminating modern technology. As long as society remains saturated with the values of the technological system, people will not accept any measures that significantly impair the functioning of that system. In order to get people to accept such measures, you would first have to convince them that the supposed "benefits" of modern technology are not worth the price that must be paid for them. Thus, your ideological attack must be focused on modern technology itself. An attempt to eliminate capitalism, globalization, centralization, or any other subordinate evil can only distract attention from the need to eliminate modern technology.

Let's imagine a many-headed monster, as in the accompanying cartoon. You can try to cut the monster's heads off one by one, but the monster will grow new heads faster than you can cut them off. The only way to defeat the monster is to cut the single neck from which all the heads grow.

So, let's forget about attacking capitalism, globalization, bureaucracy, or any other particular evils that are merely incidental to technological progress.

*2. Kaczynski Returns

This article is the second installment of a three part series concerning Theodore Kaczynski, the Unabomber. In this installment, Kaczynski answers questions about crime and what would happen to society if technology was destroyed. If you have any responses, such as questions or replies, write a letter to the editor.

On page 104, paragraph 210, you write, "there is no reason to believe that anyone would be interested in rebuilding society" if it were destroyed. Then why did humans build technology to begin with?

In paragraph 210 of ISAIF, I said that if the technoindustrial system were thoroughly broken down and remained broken down for a generation or so, "there is no reason to believe that anyone would be interested in rebuilding industrial society." You ask: "Then why did humans build technology in the first place?"

At least until the 17th century, humans did not build technology as a result of any interest in creating an industrial society; technological progress was until then an unconscious and unintentional process. For example, it's safe to say that the man who invented the horse collar (an important technical innovation of the Middle Ages) didn't do so because he wanted to build

a technologically advanced society. He did so only in order to solve some problem in his own personal life. Maybe he just got tired of the slow speed at which his ox pulled a wagon. He knew that a horse could go much faster than an ox, but the yoke used with oxen wasn't suitable for horses, so he devised a horse collar that would enable his horse to pull a wagon.

Not until approximately the 17th century did people begin to think of progress as a goal, and even then probably only a small minority consisting of intellectuals thought in terms of progress. I doubt that there was any widespread enthusiasm for progress before the Industrial Revolution got going during the latter part of the 18th century. After that, a belief in progress probably did contribute to technological development. But even then the main driving force behind progress was not an aspiration to build a technologically advanced society but competition for money and power, plus the need for surrogate activities.

If the technoindustrial system were overthrown today the world would be brought down to a technological level lower than that of the Middle Ages, because many of the techniques of the medieval times have been lost. No doubt the slow and unintentional process of accumulating technology bit by bit would occur again, just as it did the first time around. When I wrote that there was no reason to believe that anyone would be interested in rebuilding industrial society, my point was that people wouldn't be saying, "Hey, let's figure out how to make the light bulbs and generators so we can have electric light," or "Let's reinvent internal combustion engines and oil refineries so we can have cars." Peasants or warriors would be concerned only to cultivate their land with simple implements or to fight with lance and sword; they wouldn't be pursuing impractical dreams of tractors and machineguns.

Any concerted effort to rebuild an industrial economy would yield significant practical returns only after a vast expenditure of time, effort, and resources—a far greater expenditure than any submedieval society could afford. So, if an industrial society could be rebuilt at all, it could be rebuilt only through the same slow process, spanning many centuries, that was required the first time around. See ISAIF, paragraphs 210-12, and Technological Slavery, pages 333-34.

Ted Kaczynski Letter to A.O.

Ted Kaczynski explains how a revolution against industrial society could be successful.

Ted Kaczynski

2017

You write: “Even some primitive people from Mexico join the values of modern society (because of TV). What could make them go back to the forest?”

What could “make them go back to the forest” would be an end to the functioning of the world’s industrial centers. The Mexican Indians couldn’t use their TV sets if the TV stations were no longer broadcasting. They couldn’t use motor vehicles or any internal combustion engines if the refineries were no longer producing fuel. They couldn’t use any electrical appliances if the electrical power-plants were no longer producing electricity. Or, even if the Indians relied on small, local, water-powered generators, these would become useless when parts of the generators or of the appliances wore out and could not be replaced with new parts produced in factories. For example, could a group of Mexican Indians make a light bulb? I think it would be impossible, but even if it were possible it would be so difficult that it would not be worth the trouble. Thus, if the world’s industrial centers stopped functioning, the Mexican Indians would have no choice but to revert to simple, preindustrial methods.

But what could make the TV stations stop broadcasting, the power plants stop generating electricity, the refineries stop producing fuel, and the factories stop making parts? If the power-plants stopped producing electricity, then the TV stations would no longer be able to broadcast, the refineries would no longer be able to produce fuel, and the factories would no longer be able to make things. If the refineries stopped producing fuel, then the transportation of goods and people would have to cease, and therefore the factories would no longer be able to make things. If the factories were no longer able to make things, then there would be no more replacement parts to keep the TV stations, power-plants, and petroleum refineries functioning. Moreover, every factory needs things produced by other factories in order to keep operating.

Thus, modern industrial society can be compared to a complex organism in which every important part is dependent on every other important part. If any one important part of the system stops functioning, then the whole system stops functioning. Or even if the complex and finely-tuned relationship between the various parts of the system is severely disrupted, the system must stop functioning. Consequently, like any other highly complex organism, the modern industrial

system is much easier to kill than a simple organism.¹² Compare a human being with an earthworm: You can cut an earthworm into many pieces, and each piece will grow into a whole new worm. But a human being can be killed by a blow to the head, a stab to the heart or the kidney, the cutting of a major artery-even a psychological condition such as severe depression can kill a human being. Like a human being, the industrial system is vulnerable because of its complexity and the interdependence of its parts. And the more the system comes to resemble a single, highly organized worldwide entity, the more vulnerable it becomes.

Thus, to your question about what could make Mexican Indians give up modernity, the answer is: the death of the industrial system. Is it possible for revolutionary action to kill the industrial system? Of course, I can't answer that question with any certainty, but I think it may be possible to kill the industrial system. I suggest that the movement that led to the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the Bolsheviks in particular, could provide a model for action today. I don't mean that anyone should look at the Bolsheviks and say, "The Bolsheviks did such-and-such and so-and-so, therefore we should do the same." What I do mean is that the Russian example shows what a revolutionary movement might be able to accomplish today.

Throughout its history up to 1917, the Bolshevik party remained small in relation to the size of Russia. Yet when the time of crisis arrived the Bolsheviks were able to assume control of the country, and they were able to inspire millions of Russians to heroic efforts that enabled them against all odds to triumph over enormous difficulties.

Of course, the Russian Revolution is accounted a failure because the ideal socialist society of which the Bolsheviks dreamed never materialized. Revolutions never succeed in creating the new social order of which the revolutionaries dream. But destruction is usually easier than construction, and revolutions often do succeed in destroying the old social order against which they are directed. If revolutionaries today were to abandon all illusions about the possibility of creating a new and better society and take as their goal merely the death of the industrial system, they might well succeed in reaching that goal.

Notes

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/letter-ted-kaczynski-to-a-o/>

¹² I don't mean to say that modern industrial society is literally an organism in the same sense in which an earthworm or a human being is an organism. But the analogy with an organism is instructive for some purposes.

Ted Kaczynski letter to M.K.

Ted Kaczynski

2017

Ted Kaczynski describes his experiences in the wilderness and his thoughts on civilization, violence, and green anarchism.

Up to the time when I entered Harvard University at the age of sixteen, I used to dream of escaping from civilization and going to live in some wild place. During the same period, my distaste for modern life grew as I became increasingly aware that people in industrial society were reduced to the status of gears in a machine, that they lacked freedom and were at the mercy of the large organizations that controlled the conditions under which they lived.

After I entered Harvard University I took some courses in anthropology, which taught me more about primitive peoples and gave me an appetite to acquire some of the knowledge that enabled them to live in the wild. For example, I wished to have their knowledge of edible plants. But I had no idea where to get such knowledge until a couple of years later, when I discovered to my surprise that there were books about edible wild plants. The first such book that I bought was *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, by Euell Gibbons, and after that when I was home from college and graduate school during the summers, I went several times each week to the Cook County Forest Preserves near Chicago to look for edible plants. At first it seemed eerie and strange to go all alone into the forest, away from all roads and paths. But as I came to know the forest and many of the plants and animals that lived in it, the feeling of strangeness disappeared and I grew more and more comfortable in the woodland. I also became more and more certain that I did not want to spend my whole life in civilization, and that I wanted to go and live in some wild place.

Meanwhile, I was doing well in mathematics. It was fun to solve mathematical problems, but in a deeper sense mathematics was boring and empty because for me it had no purpose. If I had worked on applied mathematics I would have contributed to the development of the technological society that I hated, so I worked only on pure mathematics. But pure mathematics was only a game. I did not understand then, and I still do not understand, why mathematicians are content to fritter away their whole lives in a mere game. I myself was completely dissatisfied with such a life. I knew what I wanted: To go and live in some wild place. But I didn't know how to do so. In those days there were no primitivist movements, no survivalists, and anyone who left a promising career in mathematics to go live among forests or mountains would have been regarded as foolish or crazy. I did not know even one person who would have understood why I wanted to do such a thing. So, deep in my heart, I felt convinced that I would never be able to escape from civilization.

Because I found modern life absolutely unacceptable, I grew increasingly hopeless until, at the age of 24, I arrived at a kind of crisis: I felt so miserable that I didn't care whether I lived or died. But when I reached that point, a sudden change took place: I realized that if I didn't care whether I lived or died, then I didn't need to fear the consequences of anything I might do. Therefore I could do anything I wanted. I was free! That was the great turning-point in my life because it was then that I acquired courage, which has remained with me ever since. It was at that time, too, that I became certain that I would soon go to live in the wild, no matter what the consequences. I spent two years teaching at the University of California in order to save some money, then I resigned my position and went to look for a place to live in the forest.

I wrote for my journal on August 14, 1983: "The fifth of August I began a hike to the east. I got to my hidden camp that I have in a gulch beyond what I call "Diagonal Gulch." I stayed there through the following day, August 6. I felt the peace of the forest there. But there are few huckleberries there, and though there are deer, there is very little small game. Furthermore, it had been a long time since I had seen the beautiful and isolated plateau where the various branches of Trout Creek originate. So I decided to take off for that area on the 7th of August. A little after crossing the roads in the neighborhood of Crater Mountain I began to hear chain saws; the sound seemed to be coming from the upper reaches of Rooster Bill Creek. I assumed they were cutting trees; I didn't like it but I thought I would be able to avoid such things when I got onto the plateau. Walking across the hillsides on my way there, I saw down below me a new road that had not been there previously, and that appeared to cross one of the ridges that close in Stemple Creek. This made me feel a little sick. Nevertheless, I went on to the plateau. What I found there broke my heart. The plateau was criss-crossed with new roads, broad and well-made for roads of that kind. The plateau is ruined forever. The only thing that could save it now would be the collapse of the technological society. I couldn't bear it. That was the best and most beautiful and isolated place around here and I have wonderful memories of it.

"One road passed within a couple of hundred feet of a lovely spot where I camped for a long time a few years ago and passed many happy hours. Full of grief and rage I went back and camped by South Fork Humbug Creek..."

The next day I started for my home cabin. My route took me past a beautiful spot, a favorite place of mine where there was a spring of pure water that could safely be drunk without boiling. I stopped and said a kind of prayer to the spirit of the spring. It was a prayer in which I swore that I would take revenge for what was being done to the forest.

My journal continues: "...and then I returned home as quickly as I could because—I have something to do!" You can guess what it was that I had to do.

The problem of civilization is identical with the problem of technology. Let me first explain that when I speak of technology I do not refer only to physical apparatus such as tools and machines. I include also techniques, such as the techniques of chemistry, civil engineering, or biotechnology. Included too are human techniques such as those of propaganda or of educational psychology, as well as organizational techniques could not exist at an advanced level without the physical apparatus—the tools, machines, and structures—on which the whole technological system depends.

However, technology in the broader sense of the word includes not only modern technology but also the techniques and physical apparatus that existed at earlier stages of society. For exam-

ple, plows, harness for animals, blacksmith's tools, domesticated breeds of plants and animals, and the techniques of agriculture, animal husbandry, and metalworking. Early civilizations depended on these technologies, as well as on the human and organizational techniques needed to govern large numbers of people. Civilizations cannot exist without the technology on which they are based. Conversely, where the technology is available civilization is likely to develop sooner or later.

Thus, the problem of civilization can be equated with the problem of technology. The farther back we can push technology, the farther back we will push civilization. If we could push technology all the way back to the stone age, there would be no more civilization.

In reference to my alleged actions you ask, "Don't you think violence is violence?" Of course, violence is violence. And violence is also a necessary part of nature. If predators did not kill members of prey species, then the prey species would multiply to the point where they would destroy their environment by consuming everything edible. Many kinds of animals are violent even against members their own species. For example, chimpanzees often kills other chimpanzees. In some regions, fights are common among wild bears. The magazine *Bears and Other Top Predators*, Volume 1, Issue 2, pages 28-29, shows a photograph of bears fighting and a photograph of a bear wounded in a fight, and mentions that such wounds can be deadly. See article "Sibling Desperado," *Science News*, Volume 163, February 15, 2003.

Human beings in the wild constitute one of the more violent species. A good general survey of the cultures of hunting-and-gathering peoples is *The Hunting Peoples*, by Carleton S. Coon, published by Little, Brown and Company, Boston and Toronto, 1971, and in this book you will find numerous examples in hunting-and-gathering societies of violence by human beings against other human beings. Professor Coon makes clear (pages XIX, 3, 4, 9, 10) that he admires hunting-and-gathering peoples and regards them as more fortunate than civilized ones. But he is an honest man and does not censor out those aspects of primitive life, such as violence, that appear disagreeable to modern people. Thus, it is clear that a significant amount of violence is a natural part of human life. There is nothing wrong with violence in itself. In any particular case, whether violence is good or bad depends on how it is used and the purpose for which it is used.

So why do modern people regard violence as evil in itself? They do so for one reason only: They have been brainwashed by propaganda. Modern society uses various forms of propaganda to teach people to be frightened and horrified by violence because the technoindustrial system needs a population that is timid, docile, and afraid to assert itself, a population that will not make trouble or disrupt the orderly functioning of the system. Power depends ultimately on physical force. By teaching people that violence is wrong (except, of course, when the system itself uses violence via the police or the military), the system maintains its monopoly on physical force and thus keeps all power in its own hands.

Whatever philosophical or moral rationalizations people may invent to explain their belief that violence is wrong, the real reason for that belief is that they have unconsciously absorbed the system's propaganda.

All of the groups you mention here are part of a single movement. (Let's call it the "GA [Green Anarchist] Movement.") Of course, these people are right to the extent that they oppose civilization and the technology on which it is based. But, because of the form in which this

movement is developing, it may actually help to protect the technoindustrial system and may serve as an obstacle to revolution. I will explain:

It is difficult to suppress rebellion directly. When rebellion is put down by force, it very often breaks out again later in some new form in which the authorities find it more difficult to control. For example, in 1878 the German Reichstag enacted harsh and repressive laws against the Social Democratic movement, as a result of which the movement was crushed and its members were scattered, confused, and discouraged. But only for a short time. The movement soon reunited itself, became more energetic, and found new ways of spreading its ideas, so that by 1884 it was stronger than ever. G. A. Zimmermann, *Das Neunzehnte Jahrhundert, Zweite Hälfte, Zweiter Teil*, Druck und Verlag von Geo. Brumder, Milwaukee, 1902, page 23.

Thus, astute observers of human affairs know that the powerful classes of a society can most effectively defend themselves against rebellion by using force and direct repression only to a limited extent, and relying mainly on manipulation to deflect rebellion. One of the most effective devices used is that of providing channels through which rebellious impulses can be expressed in ways that are harmless to the system. For example, it is well known that in the Soviet Union the satirical magazine *Krokodil* was designed to provide an outlet for complaints and for resentment of the authorities in a way that would lead no one to question the legitimacy of the Soviet system or rebel against it in any serious way. But the “democratic” system of the West has evolved mechanisms for deflecting rebellion that are far more sophisticated and effective than any that existed in the Soviet Union. It is a truly remarkable fact that in modern Western society people “rebel” in favor of the values of the very system against which they imagine themselves to be rebelling. The left “rebels” in favor of racial and religious equality, equality for women and homosexuals, humane treatment of animals, and so forth. But these are the values that the American mass media teach us over and over again every day. Leftists have been so thoroughly brainwashed by media propaganda that they are able to “rebel” only in terms of these values, which are values of the technoindustrial system itself. In this way the system has successfully deflected the rebellious impulses of the left into channels that are harmless to the system.

Rebellion against technology and civilization is real rebellion, a real attack on the values of the existing system. But the green anarchists, anarcho-primitivists, and so forth (the “GA Movement”) have fallen under such heavy influence from the left that their rebellion against civilization has to a great extent been neutralized. Instead of rebelling against the values of civilization, they have adopted many civilized values themselves and have constructed an imaginary picture of primitive societies that embodies these civilized values.

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/letter-ted-kaczynski-to-m-k/>

Ted Kaczynski on Individualists Tending Toward Savagery (ITS)

Ted Kaczynski

2017

Regarding Individualists Tending Toward Savagery (ITS), you say that they do not believe that a movement should be created dedicated to the elimination of the techno-industrial system and that their intention is to stop technological progress, but without the intention to or any hope of eliminating the system.

From this, and also from the parts of the communiques that UR has sent to me, it is clear that ITS is ignorant when it comes to politics. It is absolutely impossible to stop technological progress, or even to slow it down, without eliminating the entire technological system. In addition, the parts of the communiques that I have mentioned show that ITS' understanding of revolution is at a kindergarten level. They believe that a revolution consists of a popular uprising ("popular uprising," "a sea of people ... [acting] in a violent way"). Revolutions sometimes happen this way, but, in most cases, they are political processes directed from above by a handful of leaders. Habitually, the popular uprisings are mere incidents or episodes in the political process, and in them only a small percentage of the population is involved. For example, the February "Revolution" in Russia (which in reality was not a revolution but only an insurrection) was carried out only by the industrial workers of St. Petersburg, which constituted only a small percentage of the Russian population. Their action served only to offer the Bolsheviks a point of departure that they took advantage of to take control of the whole country months later — mainly through political prowess.

Revolutions can occur without any popular uprising. For example, the Nazis seized power in Germany using only political means. Except for the coup d'état of the Munich Brewery a decade earlier (which was an ignominious failure and led Hitler to afterward only pursue power legally), the Nazis never attempted an uprising. Before taking power, the Nazis were involved in certain violent acts — for example, in street fights with the communists — and, after they took power, there was the "night of the long knives," during which Hitler physically eliminated his rivals within the Nazi party itself. However, after the aforementioned failure of the coup by the Nazis, they never again used violence against the established authorities.

It should be noted that the Nazi revolution was partly a revolution against civilization. However, he achieved nothing against civilization because Hitler was only interested in personal

power and self-glorification. He and his henchmen appropriated the potentially revolutionary forces that existed in German society (which included the anti-civilization current, among others) and exploited them to gain power for themselves.

In addition to displaying a naive concept of revolution, ITS also shows its political ignorance in other ways. If these people have ever read anything about history, they have not understood it. As a result, it is likely that any action they take, whether legal or illegal, will be counterproductive. Revolutionary actions, legal or not, should be drawn intelligently to serve political objectives, and any communiques that accompany them should be written in a politically intelligent way. This requires the leadership of people who have taken the trouble to acquire as much knowledge as possible about the ways in which societies develop and change.

The most important error that ITS commits is that they express, and therefore promote, an attitude of hopelessness about the possibility of eliminating the technological system. I do not have time to comment on historical examples in which tiny and seemingly insignificant groups, considered by most people as crazies, fools, or “romantics,” finally managed, despite everything, to carry out successful revolutions. However, an indispensable ingredient for the triumph of such a company is the confidence in the possibility of success. Since ITS tries to undermine confidence in the possibility of success when it comes to fighting the technological system, we must reject these people and include them in the list of our political adversaries.

I will only add that, in parts of the communiques that UR has sent me, some of the data on which ITS are based are erroneous and that ITS attributes to me affirmations that I have never made and opinions that I have never defended.

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/11/28/ted-kaczynski-individualists-tending-toward-savagery/>

The Road to Revolution

Ted Kaczynski

The revolution is not a dinner party...¹³

– Mao Zedong

A great revolution is brewing. What this means is that the necessary preconditions for revolution are being created. Whether the revolution will become a reality will depend on the courage, determination, persistence, and effectiveness of revolutionaries.

The necessary preconditions for revolution¹⁴ are these: There must be a strong development of values that are inconsistent with the values of the dominant classes in society, and the realization of the new values must be impossible without a collapse of the existing structure of society.

When these conditions are present, there arises an irreconcilable conflict between the new values and the values that are necessary for the maintenance of the existing structure. The tension between the two systems of values grows and can be resolved only through the eventual defeat of one of the two. If the new system of values is vigorous enough, it will prove victorious and the existing structure of society will be destroyed.

This is the way in which the two greatest revolutions of modern times—the French and Russian Revolutions—came about. Just such a conflict of values is building up in our society today. If the conflict becomes sufficiently intense, it will lead to the greatest revolution that the world has ever seen.

The central structure of modern society, the key element on which everything else depends, is technology. Technology is the principal factor determining the way in which modern people live and is the decisive force in modern history. This is the expressed opinion of various learned thinkers,¹⁵ and I doubt that many serious historians could be found who would venture to disagree with it. However, you don't have to rely on learned opinions to realize that technology

¹³ "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung* [=Zedong], Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1971, page 30.

¹⁴ As used in this article, the term "revolution" means a radical and rapid collapse of the existing structure of a society, intentionally brought about from within the society rather than by some external factor, and contrary to the will of the dominant classes of the society. An armed rebellion, even one that overthrows a government, is not a revolution in this sense of the word unless it sweeps away the existing structure of the society in which the rebellion occurs.

¹⁵ Karl Marx maintained that the means of production constituted the decisive factor in determining the character of a society, but Marx lived in a time when the principal problem to which technology was applied was that of production. Because technology has so brilliantly solved the problem of production, production is no longer the decisive factor. More critical today are other problems to which technology is applied, such as processing of information and the regulation of human behavior (e.g., through propaganda). Thus Marx's conception of the force determining

is the decisive factor in the modern world. Just look around you and you can see it yourself. Despite the vast differences that formerly existed between the cultures of the various industrialized countries, all of these countries are now converging rapidly toward a common culture and a common way of life, and they are doing so because of their common technology.

Because technology is the central structure of modern society—the structure on which everything else depends—the strong development of values totally inconsistent with the needs of the technological system would fulfill the preconditions for revolution. This kind of development is taking place right now.

Fifty years ago, when I was a kid, warm approval or even enthusiasm for technology were almost universal. By 1962 I had become hostile toward technology myself, but I wouldn't have dared to express that opinion openly, for in those days nearly everyone assumed that only a kook, or maybe a Bible-thumper from the backwoods of Mississippi, could oppose technology. I now know that even at that time there were a few thinkers who wrote critically about technology. But they were so rare and so little heard from that until I was almost 30 years old I never knew that anyone but myself opposed technological progress.

Since then there has been a profound change in attitudes toward technology. Of course, most people in our society don't have an attitude toward technology, because they never bother to think about technology as such. If the advertising industry teaches them to buy some new technogizmo, then they will buy it and play with it, but they won't think about it. The change in attitudes toward technology has occurred among the minority of people who think seriously about the society in which they live.

As far as I know, almost the only thinking people who remain enthusiastic about technology are those who stand to profit from it in some way, such as scientists, engineers, corporate executives and military men. A much larger number of people are cynical about modern society and have lost faith in its institutions. They no longer respect a political system in which the most despicable candidates can be successfully sold to the public through sophisticated propaganda techniques. They are contemptuous of an electronic entertainment industry that feeds us garbage. They know that schoolchildren are being drugged (with Ritalin, etc.) to keep them docile in the classroom, they know that species are becoming extinct at an abnormal rate, that environmental catastrophe is a very real possibility, and that technology is driving us all into the unknown at reckless speed, with consequences that may be utterly disastrous. But, because they have no hope that the technological juggernaut can be stopped, they have grown apathetic. They simply accept technological progress and its consequences as unavoidable evils, and they try not to think about the future.

But at the same time there are growing numbers of people, especially young people, who are willing to face squarely the appalling character of what the technoindustrial system is doing to the world. They are prepared to reject the values of the technoindustrial system and replace them with opposing values. They are willing to dispense with the physical security and comfort, the Disney-like toys, and the easy solutions to all problems that technology provides. They don't need the kind of status that comes from owning more and better material goods than one's neighbor does. In place of these spiritually empty values they are ready to embrace a lifestyle of moderation that rejects the obscene level of consumption that characterizes the technoindustrial

the character of a society must be broadened to include all of technology and not just the technology of production. If Marx were alive today he would undoubtedly agree.

way of life; they are capable of opting for courage and independence in place of modern man's cowardly servitude; and above all they are prepared to discard the technological ideal of human control over nature and replace it with reverence for the totality of all life on Earth—free and wild as it was created through hundreds of millions of years of evolution.

How can we use this change of attitude to lay the foundation for a revolution?

One of our tasks, obviously, is to help promote the growth of the new values and spread revolutionary ideas that will encourage active opposition to the technoindustrial system. But spreading ideas, by itself, is not very effective. Consider the response of a person who is exposed to revolutionary ideas. Let's assume that she or he is a thoughtful person who is sickened on hearing or reading of the horrors that technology has in store for the world, but feels stimulated and hopeful on learning that better, richer, more fulfilling ways of life are possible. What happens next?

Maybe nothing. In order to maintain an interest in revolutionary ideas, people have to have hope that those ideas will actually be put into effect, and they need to have an opportunity to participate personally in carrying out the ideas. If a person who has been exposed to revolutionary ideas is not offered anything practical that she can do against the techosystem, and if nothing significant is going on to keep her hope alive, she will probably lose interest. Additional exposures to the revolutionary message will have less and less effect on her the more times they are repeated, until eventually she becomes completely apathetic and refuses to think any further about the technology problem.

In order to hold people's interest, revolutionaries have to show them that things are happening—significant things—and they have to give people an opportunity to participate actively in working toward revolution. For this reason an effective revolutionary movement is necessary, a movement that is capable of making things happen, and that interested people can join or cooperate with so as to take an active part in preparing the way for revolution. Unless such a movement grows hand-in-hand with the spread of ideas, the ideas will prove relatively useless.

For the present, therefore, the most important task of revolutionaries is to build an effective movement.

The effectiveness of a revolutionary movement is not measured only by the number of people who belong to it. Far more important than the numerical strength of a movement are its cohesiveness, its determination, its commitment to a well-defined goal, its courage, and its stubborn persistence. Possessing these qualities, a surprisingly small number of people can outweigh the vacillating and uncommitted majority. For example, the Bolsheviks were never a numerically large party, yet it was they who determined the course that the Russian Revolution took. (I hasten to add that I am NOT an admirer of the Bolsheviks. To them, human beings were of value only as gears in the technological system. But that doesn't mean we can't learn lessons from the history of Bolshevism.)

An effective revolutionary movement will not worry too much about public opinion. Of course, a revolutionary movement should not offend public opinion when it has no good reason to do so. But the movement should never sacrifice its integrity by compromising its basic principles in the face of public hostility. Catering to public opinion may bring short-term advantage, but in the long run the movement will have its best chance of success if it sticks to its principles through thick and thin, no matter how unpopular those principles may become, and if it is willing to go head-to-head against the system on the fundamental issues even when the odds are all against

the movement. A movement that backs off or compromises when the going gets tough is likely to lose its cohesiveness or turn into a wishy-washy reform movement. Maintaining the cohesion and integrity of the movement, and proving its courage, are far more important than keeping the goodwill of the general public. The public is fickle, and its goodwill can turn to hostility and back again overnight.

A revolutionary movement needs patience and persistence. It may have to wait several decades before the occasion for revolution arrives, and during those decades it has to occupy itself with preparing the way for revolution. This was what the revolutionary movement in Russia did. Patience and persistence often pay off in the long run, even contrary to all expectation. History provides many examples of seemingly lost causes that won out in the end because of the stubborn persistence of their adherents, their refusal to accept defeat.

On the other hand, the occasion for revolution may arrive unexpectedly, and a revolutionary movement has to be well prepared in advance to take advantage of the occasion when it does arrive. It is said that the Bolsheviks never expected to see a revolution in their own lifetimes, yet, because their movement was well constituted for decisive action at any time, they were able to make effective use of the unforeseen breakdown of the Tsarist regime and the ensuing chaos.

Above all, a revolutionary movement must have courage. A revolution in the modern world will be no dinner party. It will be deadly and brutal. You can be sure that when the technoindustrial system begins to break down, the result will not be the sudden conversion of the entire human race into flower children. Instead, various groups will compete for power. If the opponents of technology prove toughest, they will be able to assure that the breakdown of the technosystem becomes complete and final. If other groups prove tougher, they may be able to salvage the technosystem and get it running again. Thus, an effective revolutionary movement must consist of people who are willing to pay the price that a real revolution demands: They must be ready to face disaster, suffering, and death.

There already is a revolutionary movement of sorts, but it is of low effectiveness.

First, the existing movement is of low effectiveness because it is not focused on a clear, definite goal. Instead, it has a hodgepodge of vaguely-defined goals such as an end to "domination," protection of the environment, and "justice" (whatever that means) for women, gays, and animals.

Most of these goals are not even revolutionary ones. As was pointed out at the beginning of this article, a precondition for revolution is the development of values that can be realized only through the destruction of the existing structure of society. But, to take an example, feminist goals such as equal status for women and an end to rape and domestic abuse are perfectly compatible with the existing structure of society. In fact, realization of these goals would even make the technoindustrial system function more efficiently. The same applies to most other "activist" goals. Consequently, these goals are reformist.

Among so many other goals, the one truly revolutionary goal—namely, the destruction of the technoindustrial system itself—tends to get lost in the shuffle. For revolution to become a reality, it is necessary that there should emerge a movement that has a distinct identity of its own, and is dedicated solely to eliminating the technosystem. It must not be distracted by reformist goals such as justice for this or that group.

Second, the existing movement is of low effectiveness because too many of the people in the movement are there for the wrong reasons. For some of them, revolution is just a vague and indefinite hope rather than a real and practical goal. Some are concerned more with their own special grievances than with the overall problem of technological civilization. For others, revo-

lution is only a kind of game that they play as an outlet for rebellious impulses. For still others, participation in the movement is an ego-trip. They compete for status, or they write "analyses" and "critiques" that serve more to feed their own vanity than to advance the revolutionary cause.

To create an effective revolutionary movement it will be necessary to gather together people for whom revolution is not an abstract theory, a vague fantasy, a mere hope for the indefinite future, or a game played as an outlet for rebellious impulses, but a real, definite, and practical goal to be worked for in a practical way.

When Non-Violence is Suicide

Ted Kaczynski

2001

It's the autumn of 2025 AD. The technoindustrial system fell apart a year ago, but you and your friends are doing alright. Your garden has flourished this past summer and in your cabin you have a good supply of dried vegetables, dried beans and other foodstuffs to get you through the coming winter. Just now you're harvesting your potatoes. With your spades, you and your friends uproot one potato after another and pick the plump tubers out of the soil.

Suddenly the friend at your elbow nudges you and you look up. Uh-oh. A gang of mean-looking men is coming up your trail. They have guns. They look like trouble, but you stand firm. The leader of the gang walks up to you and says,

"Nice looking potatoes you got there."

"Yeah," you reply. "They're nice-looking potatoes."

"We're going to take them" says the gang leader.

"The hell you are!" you answer. "We spent a long summer of hard work growing those potatoes..."

The gang leader points his rifle at your face and says, "-- you, punk." To his men he adds, "Dick, Ziggy, check the cabin and see what kind of food they got. We might just move in and spend the winter here. Mick, grab that bitch over there before she gets away. She got a nice ass. We'll all screw her tonight."

You get angry and start shouting, "You bastard! You can't..."

The rifle goes BANG. You're dead.

Nonviolence works only when you have the police to protect you. In the absence of police protection, nonviolence is very nearly the equivalent to suicide.

Admittedly this has not been true at all times and places. Among the African Pygmies as described by Colin Turnbull, deadly violence against humans was almost unknown. In other nomadic hunting and gathering societies people sometimes kill one another in fights, but they never conquer one another's territory or systematically slaughter other tribes. Under these conditions, nonviolence is not inconsistent with survival.

But, realistically, these are not the conditions that will prevail if and when the technoindustrial system collapses. There are a lot of mean people out there: Nazis, Hell's Angels, Ku Klux Klanners, the Mafia...many others do not belong to recognized groups. They aren't going to disappear

into thin air when the system falls apart. They will still be around. They probably wouldn't be successful at growing their own food even if they tried, and they won't try, because people of that type will find it much more congenial to take someone else's food than to grow their own. And since they are vicious, they may kill you or rape you just for the fun of it, even when they don't need your food.

Many ordinary people, too, who under present conditions are peaceful and mild-mannered, may turn vicious when they are desperate for food or good agricultural land in which to grow it. Food shortages may not be critical in so-called "backward" areas of the world where the peasants are still relatively self-sufficient, but in the industrialized countries, where agriculture is completely dependent on pesticides, chemical fertilizers and fuel for tractors (among other things) and in which few people have the skill to grow their own food efficiently, food shortages are sure to be acute when the system collapses.

Let's even assume for the sake of argument that industrialized countries have enough arable land so that all people will, in theory, be able to grow their own food by primitive methods. In the absence of a functioning government, there will be no way of distributing the city dwellers over the countryside and systematically assigning each family its own plot of land. Consequently, there will be chaos and confusion. Some people will try to grab the most or the best land for themselves, others will oppose them and deadly fights will break out. Armed groups will organize themselves for their own protection or for aggressive purposes. If you want to survive the collapse of this system, you had better be armed yourself and prepared to use your weapon efficiently. This means being prepared psychologically as well as physically.

Being armed and prepared to fight in self defense will not only be a necessary condition for your own survival, it will be your duty. The Nazi's, Hell's Angels and the Ku Klux Klanners will not be the most dangerous enemies of freedom. Because these people are unruly, turbulent and lawless, they are unlikely to create large, efficient organizations. Far more dangerous will be the kind of people who form the backbone of the present system, the people who are adapted to life in disciplined organizations: the "bourgeois" types—the engineers, business executives, bureaucrats, military officers, some police and so forth. These people will be anxious to reestablish order, organization and the technological system as quickly as possible. Their methods will be less crude than those of the Nazis and Hell's Angels but they won't hesitate to use force and violence when these are necessary for the achievement of their objectives. You **MUST** be prepared to defend yourself physically against these people.

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<http://e-library.ridingthetiger.org/texts/when-non-violence-is-suicide.htm>

Ted Kaczynski's Letter to the Saturday Evening Review (1970)

Ted Kaczynski

C. W. Griffin, Jr., exaggerates the extent to which Americans romanticize the freedom, independence, and adventure of the frontier. In any case, such romanticization should be regarded as a symptom rather than a disease. A *happily* married man does not daydream about romantic love. Similarly, a man does not romanticize frontier freedoms unless he is suffering from a lack of personal autonomy. Mr. Griffin apparently would like to change people to make them fit the restrictive structure of society. Perhaps a better solution would be to change the structure of society so that it becomes possible to allow people some of the freedom and independence that they seem to crave. A society, after all, is supposed to be designed for the benefit of the people that live in it, not the other way around.

Griffin would put the blame for our environmental problems on excessive *individual* freedoms. Actually, most of the problems are direct or indirect results of the activities of large organizations—corporations and governments. It is these organizations, after all, that control the structure and development of society. Perhaps the most unfortunate thing that has ever happened to individual liberty was its being used as an excuse for the misdeeds of huge corporations. Now the evils perpetuated by these highly collectivist organizations are blamed on “individual liberty.”

Theodore J. Kaczynski,
Lombard, Ill.

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/ted-kaczynskis-letter-to-the-saturday-evening-review-1970/>

Ted Kaczynski's Comments on Timothy McVeigh

Ted Kaczynski

I should begin by noting that the validity of my comments about McVeigh is limited by the fact that I didn't know him terribly well. We were often put in the outdoor rec yard together in separate wire-mesh cages, but I always spent most of the rec period running in a small oval, because of the restricted area of the cages and consequently I had only about 15 or 20 minutes of each rec period for talking with other inmates. Also, I was at first reluctant to become friendly with McVeigh because I thought (correctly) that any friendly relations between McVeigh and me would be reported to the media and I also thought (incorrectly, it seems) that such reports would lose me many supporters. But my reluctance very soon passed away: When you're confined with other people under the conditions that exist on this range of cells, you develop a sense of solidarity with them regardless of any differences or misgivings.

On a personal level I like McVeigh and I imagine that most people would like him. He was easily the most outgoing of all the inmates on our range of cells and had excellent social skills. He was considerate of others and knew how to deal with people effectively. He communicated somehow even with the inmates on the range of cells above ours, and, because he talked with more people, he always knew more about what was going on than anyone else on our range.

Another reason why he knew more about what was going on was that he was very observant. Up to a point, I can identify with this trait of McVeigh's. When you've lived in the woods for a while you get so that your senses are far more alert than those of a city person; you will hardly miss a footprint, or even a fragment of one, and the slightest sound, if it deviates from the pattern of sounds that you're expecting to hear at a given time and place, will catch your attention. But when I was away from the woods, or even when I was in my cabin or absorbed in some task, my senses tended to turn inward, so to speak, and the observant alertness was shut off. Here at the ADX, my senses and my mind are turned inward most of the time, so it struck me as remarkable that even in prison McVeigh remained alert and consistently took an interest in his surroundings.

It is my impression that McVeigh is very intelligent. He thinks seriously about the problems of our society, especially as they relate to the issue of individual freedom, and to the extent that he expressed his ideas to me they seemed rational and sensible. However, he discussed these matters with me only to a limited extent and I have no way of being sure that he does not have other ideas that he did not express to me and that I would not consider rational or sensible. I know almost nothing about McVeigh's opinions concerning the U.S. government or the events at Waco and Ruby Ridge. Someone sent me a transcript of his interview with 60 Minutes, but

I haven't read it yet. Consequently, I have no way of knowing whether I would consider his opinion on these subjects to be rational or sensible.

McVeigh is considered to belong to the far right, and for that reason some people apparently assume that he has racist tendencies. But I saw no indication of this. On the contrary, he was on very friendly terms with the African-American inmates here and I never heard him make any remark that could have been considered even remotely racist. I do recall his mentioning that prior to the Gulf War, he and other soldiers were subjected to propaganda designed to make them hate the people they were going to fight, but when he arrived in the Persian Gulf area he discovered that the "enemies" he was supposed to kill were human beings just like himself, and he learned to respect their culture.

McVeigh told me of his idea (which I think may have significant merit) that certain rebellious elements on the American right and left respectively had more in common with one another than is commonly realized, and that the two groups ought to join forces. This led us to discuss, though only briefly, the question of what constitutes the "right." I pointed out that the word "right," in the political sense, was originally associated with authoritarianism, and I raised the question of why certain radically anti-authoritarian groups (such as the Montana Freemen) were lumped together with authoritarian factions as the "right." McVeigh explained that the American far right could be roughly divided into two branches, the fascist/racist branch, and the individualistic or freedom-loving branch which generally was not racist. He did not know why these two branches were lumped together as the "right," but he did suggest a criterion that could be used to distinguish left from right: the left (in America today) generally dislikes firearms, while the right tends to be attracted to firearms.

By this criterion McVeigh himself would have to be assigned to the right. He once asked me what kind of rifle I'd used for hunting in Montana, and I said I'd had a .22 and a .30-06. On a later occasion McVeigh mentioned that one of the advantages of a .30-06 was that one could get armor-piercing ammunition for it. I said, "So what would I need armor-piercing ammunition for?" In reply, McVeigh indicated that I might some day want to shoot at a tank. I didn't bother to argue with him, but if I'd considered it worth the trouble I could have given the obvious answer: that the chances that I would ever have occasion to shoot at a tank were very remote. I think McVeigh knew well that there was little likelihood that I would ever need to shoot at a tank—or that he would either, unless he rejoined the Army. My speculative interpretation is that McVeigh resembles many people on the right who are attracted to powerful weapons for their own sake and independently of any likelihood that they will ever have a practical use for them. Such people tend to invent excuses, often far-fetched ones, for acquiring weapons for which they have no real need.

But McVeigh did not fit the stereotype of the extreme right-wingers. I've already indicated that he spoke of respect for other people's cultures, and in doing so he sounded like a liberal. He certainly was not a mean or hostile person, and I wasn't aware of any indication that he was super patriotic. I suspect that he is an adventurer by nature, and America since the closing of the frontier has had little room for adventurers.

McVeigh never discussed the Oklahoma City bombing with me, nor did he ever make any admissions in my hearing. I know nothing about that case except what the media have said, so I'm not going to offer any opinion about whether McVeigh did what they say he did. However, assuming that the Oklahoma City bombing was intended as a protest against the U.S. government

in general and against the government's actions at Waco in particular, I will say that I think the bombing was a bad action because it was unnecessarily inhumane.

A more effective protest could have been made with far less harm to innocent people. Most of the people who died at Oklahoma City were, I imagine, lower-level government employees—office help and the like—who were not even remotely responsible for objectionable government policies or for the events at Waco. If violence were to be used to express protest, it could have been used far more humanely, and at the same time more effectively, by being directed at the relatively small number of people who were personally responsible for the policies or actions to which the protesters objected. Such protest would have attracted just as much national attention as the Oklahoma City bombing and would have involved relatively little risk to innocent people. Moreover, the protest would have earned far more sympathy than the Oklahoma City bombing did, because it is safe to assume that many anti-government people who might have accepted violence that was more limited and carefully directed were repelled by the large loss of innocent life at Oklahoma City.

The media teach us to be horrified at the Oklahoma City bombing, but I won't have time to be horrified at it as long as there are greater horrors in the world that make it seem insignificant by comparison. Moreover, our politicians and our military kill people in far larger numbers than was done at Oklahoma City, and they do so for motives that are far more cold blooded and calculating. On orders from the president, a general will kill some thousands of people (usually including many civilians regardless of efforts to avoid such losses) without bothering to ask himself whether the killing is justified. He has to follow orders because his only other alternative would be to resign his commission, and naturally he would rather kill a few thousand people than spoil his career. The politicians and the media justify these actions with propaganda about "defending freedom." However, even if America were a free society (which it is not), most U.S. military action during at least the last couple of decades has not been necessary for the survival of American society but has been designed to protect relatively narrow economic or political interests or to boost the president's approval rating in the public-opinion polls.

The media portray the killing at Oklahoma City as a ghastly atrocity, but I remember how they cheered the U.S. action in the Gulf War just as they might have cheered for their favorite football team. The whole thing was treated as if it were a big game. I didn't see any sob stories about the death agonies of Iraqi soldiers or about their grieving families. It's easy to see the reason for the difference: America's little wars are designed to promote the interests of "the system," but violence at home is dangerous to the system, so the system's propaganda has to teach us the correspondingly correct attitudes toward such events. Yet I am much less repelled by powerless dissidents who kill a couple hundred because they think they have no other way to effectively state their protest, than I am by politicians and generals—people in positions of great power—who kill hundreds or thousands for the sake of cold calculated political and economic advantages.

You asked for my thoughts on the behavior of federal law enforcement officers. My personal experience suggests that federal law enforcement officers are neither honest nor competent, and that they often disobey their own rules.

I've found by experience that any communication with journalists is risky for one in my position. I'm taking the risk in this case mainly because I think that McVeigh would want me to help you in the way that I have. As I indicated near the beginning of this letter, when you're locked up with other people you develop a sense of solidarity with them in spite of any differences.

Sincerely yours, Ted Kaczynski.

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/ted-kaczynskis-comments-on-timothy-mcveigh/>

Forward to Technological Slavery

Ted Kaczynski

I have to begin by saying that I am deeply dissatisfied with this book. It should have been an organized and systematic exposition of a series of related ideas. Instead, it is an unorganized collection of writings that expound the ideas unsystematically. And some ideas that I consider important are not even mentioned. I simply have not had the time to organize, rewrite, and complete the contents of this book. The principal reason why I have not had time is that agencies of the United States government have created unnecessary legal difficulties for me. To mention only the most important of these difficulties, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of California has formally proposed to round up and confiscate the original and every copy of everything I have ever written and turn over all such papers to my alleged “victims” through a fictitious sale that will allow the “victims” to acquire all of the papers without having to pay anything for them. Under this plan, the government would even confiscate papers that I have given to libraries, including papers that have been on library shelves for several years. The documents in which the United States Attorney has put forward this proposal are available to the public: They are Document 704 and Document 713, Case Number CR-S-96-2S9 GEB, United States District Court for the Eastern District of California.

At this writing, I have the assistance of lawyers in resisting the government’s actions in regard to my papers. But I have learned from hard experience that it is unwise to leave everything in the hands of lawyers; one is well advised to research the legal issues oneself, keep track of what the lawyers are doing, and intervene when necessary. Such work is time-consuming, especially when one is confined in a maximum-security prison and therefore has only very limited access to law books.

I would have preferred to delay publication of the present book until I’d had time to prepare its contents properly, but it seemed advisable to publish before the government took action to confiscate all my papers. I have, moreover, another reason to avoid delay: The Federal Bureau of Prisons has proposed new regulations that would allow prison wardens to cut off almost all communications between allegedly “terrorist” prisoners and the outside world. The proposed regulations are published in the Federal Register, Volume 71, Number 63, pages 16520–25.

I have no idea when the new regulations may be approved, but if and when that happens it is all too possible that my communications will be cut off. Obviously it is important for me to publish while I can still communicate relatively freely, and that is why this book has to appear now in an unfinished state.

The version of “Industrial Society and its Future” that appears in this book differs from the original manuscript only in trivial ways; spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and the like have been corrected or improved here and there. As far as I know, all earlier versions of “Industrial Society and its Future” published in English or French contain numerous errors, such as the omission of parts of sentences and even of whole sentences, and some of these errors are serious enough so that they change or obscure the meaning of an entire paragraph. What is much more serious is that at least one completely spurious article has been published under my name. I recently received word from a correspondent in Spain that an article titled “*La Rehabilitación del Estado por los Izquierdistas*” (“The Rehabilitation of the State by the Leftists”) had been published and attributed to me. But I most certainly did not write such an article. So the reader should not assume that everything published under my name has actually been written by me. Needless to say, all writings attributed to me in the present book are authentic.

I would like to thank Dr. David Skrbina for having asked questions and raised arguments that spurred me to formulate and write down certain ideas that I had been incubating for years.

I owe thanks to a number of other people also. At the end of “The Truth About Primitive Life” I have thanked by name (and with their permission) several people who provided me with materials for that essay, and some of those people have helped me enormously in other ways as well. In particular, I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to Facundo Bermudez, Marjorie Kennedy, and Patrick Scardo. I owe special thanks to my Spanish correspondent who writes under the pseudonym “Último Reducto,” and to a female friend of his, both of whom provided stimulating argument; and Último Reducto moreover has ably translated many of my writings into Spanish. I hesitate to name others to whom I owe thanks, because I’m not sure that they would want to be named publicly. For the sake of clarity, I want to state here in summary form the four main points that I’ve tried to make in my writings.

1. Technological progress is carrying us to inevitable disaster. There may be physical disaster (for example, some form of environmental catastrophe), or there may be disaster in terms of human dignity (reduction of the human race to a degraded and servile condition). But disaster of one kind or another will certainly result from continued technological progress.

This is not an eccentric opinion. Among those frightened by the probable consequences of technological progress are Bill Joy, whose article “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us”¹⁶ is now famous, Martin Rees, author of the book *Our Final Century*,¹⁷ and Richard A. Posner, author of *Catastrophe: Risk and Response*.¹⁸ None of these three is by any stretch of the imagination radical or predisposed to find fault with the existing structure of society. Richard Posner is a conservative judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Bill Joy is a well-known computer wizard, and Martin Rees is the Astronomer Royal of Britain. These last two men, having devoted their lives to technology, would hardly be likely to fear it without having good reason to do so. Joy, Rees, and Posner are concerned mainly with physical disaster and with the possibility or indeed the likelihood that human beings will be supplanted by machines. The disaster that technological progress implies for human dignity has been discussed by men like Jacques Ellul and Lewis Mumford, whose books are widely read and respected. Neither man is considered to be out on the fringe or even close to it.

¹⁶ *Wired* magazine, April 2000.

¹⁷ Published by William Heinemann, 2003.

¹⁸ Oxford University Press, 2004.

2. Only the collapse of modern technological civilization can avert disaster. Of course, the collapse of technological civilization will itself bring disaster. But the longer the technoindustrial system continues to expand, the worse will be the eventual disaster. A lesser disaster now will avert a greater one later. The development of the technoindustrial system cannot be controlled, restrained, or guided, nor can its effects be moderated to any substantial degree.

This, again, is not an eccentric opinion. Many writers, beginning with Karl Marx, have noted the fundamental importance of technology in determining the course of society's development. In effect, they have recognized that it is technology that rules society, not the other way around. Ellul especially has emphasized the autonomy of technology, i.e., the fact that modern technology has taken on a life of its own and is not subject to human control. Ellul, moreover, was not the first to formulate this conclusion. Already in 1934 the Mexican thinker Samuel Ramos¹⁹ clearly stated the principle of technological autonomy, and this insight was adumbrated as early as the 1860s by Samuel Butler. Of course, no one questions the obvious fact that human individuals or groups can control technology in the sense that at a given point in time they can decide what to do with a particular item of technology. What the principle of technological autonomy asserts is that the overall development of technology, and its long-term consequences for society, are not subject to human control. Hence, as long as modern technology continues to exist, there is little we can do to moderate its effects.

A corollary is that nothing short of the collapse of technological society can avert a greater disaster. Thus, if we want to defend ourselves against technology, the only action we can take that might prove effective is an effort to precipitate the collapse of technological society. Though this conclusion is an obvious consequence of the principle of technological autonomy, and though it possibly is implied by certain statements of Ellul, I know of no conventionally published writer who has explicitly recognized that our only way out is through the collapse of technological society. This seeming blindness to the obvious can only be explained as the result of timidity.

If we want to precipitate the collapse of technological society, then our goal is a revolutionary one under any reasonable definition of that term. What we are faced with, therefore, is a need for out-and-out revolution.

3. The political left is technological society's first line of defense against revolution. In fact, the left today serves as a kind of fire extinguisher that douses and quenches any nascent revolutionary movement. What do I mean by "the left"? If you think that racism, sexism, gay rights, animal rights, indigenous people's rights, and "social justice" in general are among the most important issues that the world currently faces, then you are a leftist as I use that term. If you don't like this application of the word "leftist," then you are free to designate the people I'm referring to by some other term. But, whatever you call them, the people who extinguish revolutionary movements are the people who are drawn indiscriminately to causes: racism, sexism, gay rights, animal rights, the environment, poverty, sweatshops, neocolonialism...it's all the same to them. These people constitute a subculture that has been labeled "the adversary culture."²⁰ Whenever a movement of resistance begins to emerge, these leftists (or whatever you choose to call them) come swarming to it like flies to honey until they outnumber the original members of the move-

¹⁹ *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*, Décima Edición, Espasa-Calpe Mexicana, Mexico City 1982 (originally published in 1934), pages 104–105.

²⁰ See Paul Hollander, *The Survival of the Adversary Culture*.

ment, take it over, and turn it into just another leftist faction, thereby emasculating it. The history of “Earth First!” provides an elegant example of this process.²¹

4. What is needed is a new revolutionary movement, dedicated to the elimination of technological society, that will take measures to exclude all leftists, as well as the assorted neurotics, lazies, incompetents, charlatans, and persons deficient in self-control who are drawn to resistance movements in America today. Just what form a revolutionary movement should take remains open to discussion. What is clear is that, for a start, people who are serious about addressing the problem of technology must establish systematic contact with one another and a sense of common purpose; they must strictly separate themselves from the “adversary culture”; they must be oriented toward practical action, without renouncing a priori the most extreme forms of action; and they must take as their goal nothing less than the dissolution of technological civilization.

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/ted-kaczynskis-forward-to-technological-slavery/>

²¹ The process is ably documented by Martha E Lee, *Earth First!: Environmental Apocalypse*, Syracuse University Press, 1995.

In Defense of Violence

Ted Kaczynski

When I wrote to the New York Times offering to desist from terrorism if my manuscript were published, I promised that the manifesto would not explicitly advocate violence, because I assumed that the mainstream media would refuse to publish anything that did advocate violence. For that reason, in *Industrial Society and Its Future* (ISIF), I understated the probable role of violence in revolution. In reality, I think it is almost certain that a successful revolution against the techno-industrial system will have to involve violence at some point.

Force and violence are the ultimate sanction. When a major social conflict cannot be resolved through compromise, the issue is settled by physical force or the threat of it. As I argued in ISIF, paragraphs 125–135, if we try to compromise with technology we play a losing game. The system never is and never will be satisfied with any stable situation — it seeks always to expand its power and will never permanently tolerate anything that remains outside of its control (ISIF, paragraph 164). Thus the conflict between us and the system is irreconcilable and in the end can be resolved only through physical force. The system depends on force and violence to maintain itself — that’s what the police and the army are for. If we revolutionaries renounce all recourse to violence, we put ourselves at a crippling disadvantage vis-a-vis the system. I am not advocating indiscriminate or automatic violence; in many situations nonviolent tactics are the most effective. But I do maintain that violence is an important part of the revolutionary’s tool kit, and that we should be prepared to use it when we can gain an important advantage by doing so.

The reason why the system teaches us to be horrified at violence is that violence of any kind is dangerous to the system. The system requires order above all; it needs people who are docile and obedient and don’t make trouble. Roger Lane has shown that prior to the Industrial Revolution, American society was far more tolerant of violence than it is today, and that the emphasis on nonviolence arose in response to the industrial system’s need for an orderly and docile citizenry. (See Chapter 12 of *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr.) Allowing for some exceptions, the leaders of the system are quite sincere in their rejection of violence. Though the system has to use violence to preserve itself, it usually tries to keep the level of violence— including its own violence — as low as it can, because violence intensifies the social stresses that endanger the system. The “bad cop” who beats people up is in his own irrational way a rebel against the system. To the most rational and self-disciplined members of the technocracy, the ideal cop is one who uses just enough force to maintain public order and social discipline, and no more than just enough.

Most people who insist on nonviolence as a matter of principle fall into one of three categories. First, there are the conformists — those who believe in nonviolence because the system has successfully brainwashed them. Second, there are the cowards. Third, there are the saints — those rather rare people whose belief in nonviolence is motivated by genuine compassion.

As for the conformists and the cowards, they are beneath contempt and we need not say any more about them. The saints, on the other hand, deserve our respect. If we accepted their principles we would in effect be giving up the revolution, but all the same they may have an important role to play. Through the turmoil and violence that will probably accompany a revolution, they can help to keep alive the ideal of kindness and compassion; and- who knows? — maybe some day they will even have a practical effect in reducing the amount of cruelty in human society. But by themselves they cannot win a revolution. For that, tough fighters are needed.

That most opposition to violence in our society is merely a matter of conformity or social convention can be seen from the way in which attitudes toward violence vary according to the circumstances under which it is carried out. When violence is carried out with the approval of the system (as in war, for instance), most people take it for granted. They are horrified by violence only when it is disapproved by the system.

My lawyers brought a neuropsychologist, a Dr. Watson, to give me some tests to verify that I wasn't crazy. After the testing was done, Dr. Watson asked me some questions about my bombings. Among other things, he asked me how I felt about the impact of my actions on the "victims" and their families, and he seemed rather troubled that an intelligent man like me could kill people without feeling much guilt and without worrying very much about the impact on the dead men's families. But if I had been a soldier who had killed or maimed enemy soldiers in a war, it would not even have occurred to Dr. Watson to ask how I felt about the impact on the victims or their families. No one expects a soldier to hesitate in killing enemy soldiers or to worry about how the dead men's families feel, and very few soldiers do worry about such things. This shows that most people's attitude toward violence is governed not by compassion but by social convention.

The breakdown of the techno-industrial system will almost certainly involve widespread physical hardship. If the breakdown is sudden, it will mean actual starvation, because there will be no pesticides and chemical fertilizers, no high-tech hybrid seeds, no fuel or spare parts for farm machinery, no trucks and trains to carry produce to the cities. Even if the system disintegrates somewhat gradually over a period of a few decades, it is almost inconceivable that the reduction of the population and the transition to subsistence agriculture can be carried out in a smooth and orderly way. Many people will suffer for lack of food or other physical necessities, and under such circumstances there is sure to be widespread social disorder and therefore fighting. Look at history! The rapid breakdown of a civilization is almost always accompanied by violence, and the more advanced the civilization the greater the violence.

Modern middle-class culture is exceptional in the degree to which it tries to suppress aggression, which is a normal part of the behavioral repertoire of human beings and of most other mammals. Most societies throughout human history have been more tolerant of aggression than today's middle class. It is true that there have been a few primitive cultures that were strictly nonviolent, and the ideologies of passivity and nonviolence have held these cultures up as examples to show how violent modern society is in contrast to the noble savage. But with conscious or unconscious dishonesty they completely ignore the far more numerous primitive cultures that permit a much greater degree of violence than modern middle-class morality does. For example,

Derrick Jensen, in *Listening to the Land* (Sierra Club Books, 1995, page 3) lauds the Okanagan Indians of British Columbia for the fact that they never engage in physical violence, but not a word does he say in acknowledgement of the fact that the majority of North American Indian tribes were distinctly warlike. Many of the tribes even cultivated war as something noble and admirable, and fought unnecessary wars simply because the young men wanted to win military glory. (Lest the feminists try to blame it all on those nasty male beasts, it should be pointed out that the men were egged on by the women. Among the warlike tribes, every woman wanted her sons to be brave warriors, and one of the reasons why the young men wanted to win military glory was that it made them popular with the young ladies.)

Of course, primitive warfare was very different from modern warfare. Today soldiers fight in order to satisfy the ambitions of politicians or dictators; in major wars they usually are conscripted, and even if they volunteer they generally do so only because they have been brainwashed by propaganda. The modern battlefield is a slaughterhouse in which the skill and courage of an individual soldier have little effect on his chances of survival. In contrast, the American Indians fought either to protect themselves and their families or because they wanted to fight. Their battles were on a small scale, so that the individual warrior was not reduced to an insignificant bit of cannon fodder. And their conflicts resulted in none of the massive environmental damage that accompanies modern warfare. In fact, since their wars kept the population down, the environmental consequences were positive.

Eliminating all violence would increase our life-expectancy, but life-expectancy in modern society is probably longer than it has ever been in any other society, yet modern society is deeply troubled. There have been many other societies in which life-expectancy has been much shorter, but in which there has been far less stress, frustration, anxiety or other psychological pain. This shows that life-expectancy is not of paramount importance for human happiness; still less is it important for human freedom.

I don't want to give the impression that I consider violence desirable for its own sake. Quite the contrary. I would much rather see people live together without hurting each other physically, economically, psychological, or in any other way. But the elimination of violence should not be at the top of our list of priorities. The first priority must be to get rid of the techno-industrial system.

The Long-Term Outcome of Geo-Engineering

Ted Kaczynski

2016

In 2009, a correspondent asked me whether I thought nuclear weapons were the most dangerous aspect of modern technology. What follows is my reply, heavily rewritten. The most dangerous aspect of modern technology probably is not nuclear weapons. It could plausibly be argued that the remedies for global warming that are likely to be adopted constitute the most dangerous aspect of modern technology.

Nations have a strong incentive to avoid using nuclear weapons, at least on any large scale, because such use would probably be suicidal. This doesn't mean that nuclear war can never happen. On the contrary, the risk of it is very real. But a major nuclear war at least is not a strong probability for the foreseeable future.

On the other hand, it is virtually certain that nations will fail to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide sufficiently and in time to prevent global warming from becoming disastrous. Instead, global warming will be kept in check through "geo-engineering." This means that the Earth's climate will be artificially managed to keep it within acceptable limits. Of the many tools that have been proposed for management of the Earth's climate, three examples may be mentioned here:

- i. Powdered iron can be dumped into the oceans to stimulate the growth of plankton that will absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- ii. Microbes or other organisms may be genetically engineered to consume atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- iii. Carbon dioxide may be pumped into underground reservoirs for permanent storage there.

Any attempt at geo-engineering will entail a grave risk of immediate catastrophe. "Geo-engineering makes the problem of ballistic-missile defense look easy. It has to work the first time, and just right." Novel technological solutions usually have to be corrected repeatedly through trial and error; rarely do they work "the first time, and just right," and that's why people "quite rightly see [geo-engineering] as a scary thing."

But let's assume that geo-engineering does work the first time and just right. Even so, there is every reason to expect that the longer-term consequences will be catastrophic.

First: Attempts to meddle with the environment almost always have unforeseen, undesirable consequences. In order to correct the undesirable consequences, further meddling with the environment is required. This in turn has other unforeseen consequences ... and so forth. In trying to solve our problems by tinkering with the environment we just get ourselves deeper and deeper into trouble.

Second: For hundreds of millions of years, natural processes have kept the Earth's climate and the composition of its atmosphere within limits that have allowed the survival and evolution of complex forms of life. Sometimes during this period the climate has varied enough to cause the extinction of numerous species, but it has not become so extreme as to wipe out all of the most complex organisms. When human beings have taken over the management of the Earth's climate, the natural processes that have kept the climate within livable limits will lose their capacity to perform that function. The climate will then be entirely dependent on human management. Since the Earth's climate is a worldwide phenomenon, it cannot be managed by independent local groups; its management will have to be organized on a worldwide basis and therefore will require rapid, worldwide communication. For this reason among others, management of the Earth's climate will be dependent on technological civilization. Every past civilization has broken down eventually, and modern technological civilization likewise will break down sooner or later. When that happens, the system of human climate-management necessarily will break down too. Because the natural processes that kept the climate within certain limits will be defunct, the Earth's climate can be expected to go haywire. In all probability the Earth will become too hot or too cold for the survival of complex life-forms, or the percentage of oxygen in the atmosphere will sink too low, or the atmosphere will become contaminated with toxic gasses, or some other atmospheric disaster will occur.

Third: When the Earth has a managed climate, maintenance of the technological system will be considered essential for survival because, as has just been pointed out, the breakdown of the technological system will probably lead to radical and fatal disruption of the climate. The elimination of the technological system, through revolution or by any other means, would be almost equivalent to suicide. Because the system will be seen as indispensable for survival, it will be virtually immune to challenge. The elite of our society-the scientists and engineers, the corporation executives, the government officials and the politicians-are afraid of nuclear war because it would lead to their own destruction. But they will be delighted to see the system that gives them their power and their status become indispensable and therefore immune to any serious challenge. Consequently, while they will make every effort to avoid nuclear war, they will be quite pleased to undertake management of the Earth's climate.

Morality and Revolution

Ted Kaczynski

1999

“Morality, guilt and fear of condemnation act as cops in our heads, destroying our spontaneity, our wildness, our ability to live our lives to the full... I try to act on my whims, my spontaneous urges without caring what others think of me... I want no constraints on my life; I want the opening of all possibilities... This means... destroying all morality.” — Feral Faun, “The Cops in Our Heads: Some Thoughts on Anarchy and Morality.”²²

It is true that the concept of morality as conventionally understood is one of the most important tools that the system uses to control us, and we must liberate ourselves from it.

But suppose you’re in a bad mood one day. You see an inoffensive but ugly old lady; her appearance irritates you, and your “spontaneous urges” impel you to knock her down and kick her. Or suppose you have a “thing” for little girls, so your “spontaneous urges” lead you to pick out a cute four-year-old, rip off her clothes, and rape her as she screams in terror.

I would be willing to bet that there is not one anarchist reading this who would not be disgusted by such actions, or who would not try to prevent them if he saw them being carried out. Is this only a consequence of the moral conditioning that our society imposes on us?

I argue that it is not. I propose that there is a kind of natural “morality” (note the quotation marks), or a conception of fairness, that runs as a common thread through all cultures and tends to appear in them in some form or other, though it may often be submerged or modified by forces specific to a particular culture. Perhaps this conception of fairness is biologically predisposed. At any rate it can be summarized in the following Six Principles:

1. Do not harm anyone who has not previously harmed you, or threatened to do so.
2. (Principle of self-defense and retaliation) You can harm others in order to forestall harm with which they threaten you, or in retaliation for harm that they have already inflicted on you.
3. One good turn deserves another: If someone has done you a favor, you should be willing to do her or him a comparable favor if and when he or she should need one.
4. The strong should have consideration for the weak.

²² *The Quest for the Spiritual: A Basis for a Radical Analysis of Religion, and Other Essays* by Feral Faun, published by Green Anarchist, BCM 1715, London WC 1N 3XX, United Kingdom.

5. Do not lie.

6. Abide faithfully by any promises or agreements that you make.

To take a couple of examples of the ways in which the Six Principles often are submerged by cultural forces, among the Navajo, traditionally, it was considered “morally acceptable” to use deception when trading with anyone who was not a member of the tribe (WA. Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology*, 9th ed., p. 207), though this contravenes principles 1, 5, and 6. And in our society many people will reject the principle of retaliation: Because of industrial society’s imperative need for social order and because of the disruptive potential of personal retaliatory action, we are trained to suppress our retaliatory impulses and leave any serious retaliation (called “justice”) to the legal system.

In spite of such examples, I maintain that the Six Principles tend toward universality. But whether or not one accepts that the Six Principles are to any extent universal, I feel safe in assuming that almost all readers of this article will agree with the principles (with the possible exception of the principle of retaliation) in some shape or other. Hence the Six Principles can serve as a basis for the present discussion.

I argue that the Six Principles should not be regarded as a moral code, for several reasons.

First. The principles are vague and can be interpreted in such widely ways that there will be no consistent agreement as to their application in concrete cases. For instance, if Smith insists on playing his radio so loud that it prevents Jones from sleeping, and if Jones smashes Smith’s radio for him, is Jones’s action unprovoked harm inflicted on Smith, or is it legitimate self-defense against harm that Smith is inflicting on Jones? On this question Smith and Jones are not likely to agree! (All the same, there are limits to the interpretation of the Six Principles. I imagine it would be difficult to find anyone in any culture who would interpret the principles in such a way as to justify brutal physical abuse of unoffending old ladies or the rape of four-year-old girls.)

Second. Most people will agree that it is sometimes “morally” justifiable to make exceptions to the Six Principles. If your friend has destroyed logging equipment belonging to a large timber corporation, and if the police come around to ask you who did it, any green anarchist will agree that it is justifiable to lie and say, “I don’t know”.

Third. The Six Principles have not generally been treated as if they possessed the force and rigidity of true moral laws. People often violate the Six Principles even when there is no “moral” justification for doing so. Moreover, as already noted, the moral codes of particular societies frequently conflict with and override the Six Principles. Rather than laws, the principles are only a kind of guide, an expression of our more generous impulses that reminds us not to do certain things that we may later look back on with disgust.

Fourth. I suggest that the term “morality” should be used only to designate socially imposed codes of behavior that are specific to certain societies, cultures, or subcultures. Since the Six Principles, in some form or other, tend to be universal and may well be biologically predisposed, they should not be described as morality.

Assuming that most anarchists will accept the Six Principles, what the anarchist (or, at least, the anarchist of individualistic type) does is claim the right to interpret the principles for himself in any concrete situation in which he is involved and decide for himself when to make exceptions to the principles, rather than letting any authority make such decisions for him.

However, when people interpret the Six principles for themselves, conflicts arise because different individuals interpret the principles differently. For this reason among others, practically

all societies have evolved rules that restrict behavior in more precise ways than the Six Principles do. In other words, whenever a number of people are together for an extended period of time, it is almost inevitable that some degree of morality will develop. Only the hermit is completely free. This is not an attempt to debunk the idea of anarchy. Even if there is no such thing as a society perfectly free of morality, still there is a big difference between a society in which the burden of morality is light and one in which it is heavy. The pygmies of the African rain forest, as described by Colin Turnbull in his books *The Forest People* and *Wayward Servants: The Two Worlds of the African Pygmies*, provide an example of a society that is not far from the anarchist ideal. Their rules are few and flexible and allow a very generous measure of personal liberty. (Yet, even though they have no cops, courts or prisons, Turnbull mentions no case of homicide among them.)

In contrast, in technologically advanced societies the social mechanism is complex and rigid, and can function only when human behavior is closely regulated. Consequently such societies require a far more restrictive system of law and morality. (For present purposes we don't need to distinguish between law and morality. We will simply consider law as a particular kind of morality, which is not unreasonable, since in our society it is widely regarded as immoral to break the law.) Old-fashioned people complain of moral looseness in modern society, and it is true that in some respects our society is relatively free of morality. But I would argue that our society's relaxation of morality in sex, art, literature, dress, religion, etc., is in large part a reaction to the severe tightening of controls on human behavior in the practical domain. Art, literature and the like provide a harmless outlet for rebellious impulses that would be dangerous to the system if they took a more practical direction, and hedonistic satisfactions such as overindulgence in sex or food, or intensely stimulating forms of entertainment, help people to forget the loss of their freedom.

At any rate, it is clear that in any society some morality serves practical functions. One of these functions is that of forestalling conflicts or making it possible to resolve them without recourse to violence. (According to Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's book *The Harmless People*, Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1989, pages 10, 82, 83, the Bushmen of Southern Africa own as private property the right to gather food in specified areas of the veldt, and they respect these property rights strictly. It is easy to see how such rules can prevent conflicts over the use of food resources.)

Since anarchists place a high value on personal liberty, they presumably will want to keep morality to a minimum, even if this costs them something in personal safety or other practical advantages. It's not my purpose here to try to determine where to strike the balance between freedom and the practical advantages of morality, but I do want to call attention to a point that is often overlooked: the practical or materialistic benefits of morality are counterbalanced by the psychological cost of repressing our "immoral" impulses. Common among moralists is a concept of "progress" according to which the human race is supposed to become ever more moral. More and more "immoral" impulses are to be suppressed and replaced by "civilized" behavior. To these people morality apparently is an end in itself. They never seem to ask why human beings should become more moral. What end is to be served by morality? If the end is anything resembling human well-being then an ever more sweeping and intensive morality can only be counterproductive, since it is certain that the psychological cost of suppressing "immoral" impulses will eventually outweigh any advantages conferred by morality (if it does not do so already). In fact, it is clear that, whatever excuses they may invent, the real motive of the moralists is to satisfy some psychological need of their own by imposing their morality on other people. Their drive

toward morality is not an outcome of any rational program for improving the lot of the human race.

This aggressive morality has nothing to do with the Six Principles of fairness. It is actually inconsistent with them. By trying to impose their morality on other people, whether by force or through propaganda and training, the moralists are doing them unprovoked harm in contravention of the first of the Six Principles. One thinks of nineteenth-century missionaries who made primitive people feel guilty about their sexual practices, or modern leftists who try to suppress politically incorrect speech.

Morality often is antagonistic toward the Six Principles in other ways as well. To take just a few examples:

In our society private property is not what it is among the Bushmen — a simple device for avoiding conflict over the use of resources. Instead, it is a system whereby certain persons or organizations arrogate control over vast quantities of resources that they use to exert power over other people. In this they certainly violate the first and fourth principles of fairness. By requiring us to respect property, the morality of our society helps to perpetuate a system that is clearly in conflict with the Six Principles.

Among many primitive peoples, deformed babies are killed at birth (see, e.g., Paul Schebesta, *Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri*, I.Band, Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Brussels, 1938, page 138), and a similar practice apparently was widespread in the United States up to about the middle of the 20th century. “Babies who were born malformed or too small or just blue and not breathing well were listed [by doctors] as stillborn, placed out of sight and left to die.” Autl Gawande, “The Score,” *The New Yorker*, October 9, 2006, page 64. Nowadays any such practice would be regarded as shockingly immoral. But mental-health professionals who study the psychological problems of the disabled can tell us how severe these problems often are. True, even among the severely deformed — for example, those born without arms or legs — there may be occasional individuals who achieve satisfying lives. But most persons with such a degree of disability are condemned to lives of inferiority and helplessness, and to rear a baby with extreme deformities until it is old enough to be conscious of its own helplessness is usually an act of cruelty. In any given case, of course, it may be difficult to balance the likelihood that a deformed baby will lead a miserable existence, if reared, against the chance that it will achieve a worthwhile life. The point is, however, that the moral code of modern society does not permit such balancing. It *automatically* requires every baby to be reared, no matter how extreme its physical or mental disabilities, and no matter how remote the chances that its life can be anything but wretched. This is one of the most ruthless aspects of modern morality.

The military is expected to kill or refrain from killing in blind obedience to orders from the government; policemen and judges are expected to imprison or release persons in mechanical obedience to the law. It would be regarded as “unethical” and “irresponsible” for soldiers, judges, or policemen to act according to their own sense of fairness rather than in conformity with the rules of the system. A moral and “responsible” judge will send a man to prison if the law tells him to do so, even if the man is blameless according to the Six Principles.

A claim of morality often serves as a cloak for what would otherwise be seen as the naked imposition of one’s own will on other people. Thus, if a person said, “I am going to prevent you from having an abortion (or from having sex or eating meat or something else) just because I personally find it offensive”, his attempt to impose his will would be considered arrogant and unreasonable. But if he claims to have a moral basis for what he is doing, if he says, “I’m going

to prevent you from having an abortion because it's immoral", then his attempt to impose his will acquires a certain legitimacy, or at least tends to be treated with more respect than it would be if he made no moral claim.

People who are strongly attached to the morality of their own society often are oblivious to the principles of fairness. The highly moral and Christian businessman John D. Rockefeller used underhand methods to achieve success, as is admitted by Allan Nevins in his admiring biography of Rockefeller. Today, screwing people in one way or another is almost an inevitable part of any large-scale business enterprise. Willful distortion of the truth, serious enough so that it amounts to lying, is in practice treated as acceptable behavior among politicians and journalists, though most of them undoubtedly regard themselves as moral people.

I have before me a flyer sent out by a magazine called *The National Interest*. In it I find the following:

"Your task at hand is to defend our nation's interests abroad, and rally support at home for your efforts.

"You are not, of course, naive. You believe that, for better or worse, international politics remains essentially power politics— that as Thomas Hobbes observed, when there is no agreement among states, clubs are always trumps."

This is a nearly naked advocacy of Machiavellianism in international affairs, though it is safe to assume that the people responsible for the flyer I've just quoted are firm adherents of conventional morality within the United States. For such people, I suggest, conventional morality serves as a *substitute* for the Six Principles. As long as these people comply with conventional morality, they have a sense of righteousness that enables them to disregard the principles of fairness without discomfort.

Another way in which morality is antagonistic toward the Six Principles is that it often serves as an excuse for mistreatment or exploitation of persons who have violated the moral code or the laws of a given society. In the United States, politicians promote their careers by "getting tough on crime" and advocating harsh penalties for people who have broken the law. Prosecutors often seek personal advancement by being as hard on defendants as the law allows them to be. This satisfies certain sadistic and authoritarian impulses of the public and allays the privileged classes' fear of social disorder. It all has little to do with the Six Principles of fairness. Many of the "criminals" who are subjected to harsh penalties—for example, people convicted of possessing marijuana—have in no sense violated the Six Principles. But even where culprits have violated the Six Principles their harsh treatment is motivated not by a concern for fairness, or even for morality, but politicians' and prosecutors' personal ambitions or by the public's sadistic and punitive appetites. Morality merely provides the *excuse*.

In sum, anyone who takes a detached look at modern society will see that, for all its emphasis on morality, it observes the principles of fairness very poorly indeed. Certainly less well than many primitive societies do.

Allowing for various exceptions, the main purpose that morality serves in modern society is to facilitate the functioning of the technoindustrial system. Here's how it works:

Our conception both of fairness and of morality is heavily influenced by self-interest. For example, I feel strongly and sincerely that it is perfectly fair for me to smash up the equipment of someone who is cutting down the forest. Yet part of the reason why I feel this way is that the continued existence of the forest serves my personal needs. If I had no personal attachment to the forest I might feel differently. Similarly, most rich people probably feel sincerely that the

laws that restrict the ways in which they use their property are unfair. There can be no doubt that, however sincere these feelings may be, they are motivated largely by self-interest.

People who occupy positions of power within the system have an interest in promoting the security and the expansion of the system. When these people perceive that certain moral ideas strengthen the system or make it more secure, then, either from conscious self-interest or because their moral feelings are influenced by self-interest, they apply pressure to the media and to educators to promote these moral ideas. Thus the requirements of respect for property, and of orderly, docile, rule-following, cooperative behavior, have become moral values in our society (even though these requirements can conflict with the principles of fairness) because they are necessary to the functioning of the system. Similarly; harmony and equality between different races and ethnic groups is a moral value of our society because interracial and interethnic conflict impede the functioning of the system. Equal treatment of all races and ethnic groups may be required by the principles of fairness, but this is not why it is a moral value of our society. It is a moral value of our society because it is good for the technoindustrial system. Traditional moral restraints on sexual behavior have been relaxed because the people who have power see that these restraints are not necessary to the functioning of the system and that maintaining them produces tensions and conflicts that are harmful to the system.

Particularly instructive is the moral prohibition of violence in our society. (By “violence” I mean physical attacks on human beings or the application of physical force to human beings.) Several hundred years ago, violence per se was not considered immoral in European society. In fact, under suitable conditions, it was admired. The most prestigious social class was the nobility, which was then a warrior caste. Even on the eve of the Industrial violence was not regarded as the greatest of all evils, and certain other values—personal liberty for example—were felt to be more important than the avoidance of violence. In America, well into the nineteenth century, public attitudes toward the police were negative, and police forces were kept weak and inefficient because it was felt that they were a threat to freedom. People preferred to see to their own defense and accept a fairly high level of violence in society rather than risk any of their personal liberty.²³

Since then, attitudes toward violence have changed dramatically. Today the media, the schools, and all who are committed to the system brainwash us to believe that violence is the one thing above all others that we must never commit. (Of course, when the system finds it convenient to use violence—via the police or the military—for its own purposes, it can always find an excuse for doing so.)

It is sometimes claimed that the modern attitude toward violence is a result of the gentling influence of Christianity, but this makes no sense. The period during which Christianity was most powerful in Europe, the Middle Ages, was a particularly violent epoch. It has been during the course of the Industrial Revolution and the ensuing technological changes that attitudes toward violence have been altered, and over the same span of time the influence of Christianity has been markedly weakened. Clearly it has not been Christianity that has changed attitudes toward violence.

²³ See Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr (editors), *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Bantam Books, New York, 1970, Chapter 12, by Roger Lane; also, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15th Edition, 2003, Volume 25, article “Police,” pages 959–960. On medieval attitudes toward violence and the reasons why those attitudes changed, see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, Revised Edition, Blackwell Publishing, 2000, pages 161–172.

It is necessary for the functioning of modern industrial society that people should cooperate in a rigid, machine-like way, obeying rules, following orders and schedules, carrying out prescribed procedures. Consequently the system requires, above all, human docility and social order. Of all human behaviors, violence is the one most disruptive of social order, hence the one most dangerous to the system. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the powerful classes, perceiving that violence was increasingly contrary to their interest, changed their attitude toward it. Because their influence was predominant in determining what was printed by the press and taught in the schools, they gradually transformed the attitude of the entire society, so that today most middle-class people, and even the majority of those who think themselves rebels against the system, believe that violence is the ultimate sin. They imagine that their opposition to violence is the expression of a moral decision on their part, and in a sense it is, but it is based on a morality that is designed to serve the interest of the system and is instilled through propaganda. In fact, these people have simply been brainwashed.

It goes without saying that in order to bring about a revolution against the technoindustrial system it will be necessary to discard conventional morality. One of the two main points that I've tried to make in this article is that even the most radical rejection of conventional morality does not necessarily entail the abandonment of human decency: there is a "natural" (and in some sense perhaps universal) morality—or, as I have preferred to call it, a concept of fairness—that tends to keep our conduct toward other people "decent" even when we have discarded all formal morality.

The other main point I've tried to make is that the concept of morality is used for many purposes that have nothing to do with human decency or with what I've called "fairness". Modern society in particular uses morality as a tool in manipulating human behavior for purposes that often are completely inconsistent with human decency.

Thus, once revolutionaries have decided that the present form of society must be eliminated, there is no reason why they should hesitate to reject existing morality; and their rejection of morality will by no means be equivalent to a rejection of human decency.

There's no denying, however, that revolution against the technonindustrial system will violate human decency and the principles of fairness. With the collapse of the system, whether it is spontaneous or a result of revolution, countless innocent people will suffer and die. Our current situation is one of those in which we have to decide whether to commit injustice and cruelty in order to prevent a greater evil.

For comparison, consider World War II. At that time the ambitions of ruthless dictators could be thwarted only by making war on a large scale, and, given the conditions of modern warfare, millions of innocent civilians inevitably were killed or mutilated. Few people will deny that this constituted an extreme and inexcusable injustice to the victims, yet fewer still will argue that Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese militarists should have been allowed to dominate the world.

If it was acceptable to fight World War II in spite of the severe cruelty to millions of innocent people that that entailed, then a revolution against the technoindustrial system should be acceptable too. Had the fascists come to dominate the world, they doubtless would have treated their subject populations with brutality, would have reduced millions to slavery under harsh conditions, and would have exterminated many people outright. But, however horrible that might have been, it seems almost trivial in comparison with the disasters with which the technoindustrial system threatens us. Hitler and his allies merely tried to repeat on a larger scale the kinds of atrocities that have occurred again and again throughout the history of civilization.

What modern technology threatens is absolutely without precedent. Today we have to ask ourselves whether nuclear war, biological disaster, or ecological collapse will produce casualties many times greater than those of World War II; whether the human race will continue to exist or whether it will be replaced by intelligent machines or genetically engineered freaks; whether the last vestiges of human dignity will disappear, not merely for the duration of a particular totalitarian regime but for all time; whether our world will even be inhabitable a couple of hundred years from now. Under these circumstances, who will claim that World War II was acceptable but that a revolution against the technoindustrial system is not?

Though revolution will necessarily involve violation of the principles of fairness, revolutionaries should make every effort to avoid violating those principles any more than is really necessary—not only from respect for human decency, but also for practical reasons. By complying with the principles of fairness to the extent that doing so is not incompatible with revolutionary action, revolutionaries will win the respect of nonrevolutionaries, will be able to recruit better people to be revolutionaries, and will increase the self-respect of the revolutionary movement, thereby strengthening its esprit de corps.

Technological Slavery — Kaczynski, Theodore J.

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The Coming Revolution

Ted Kaczynski

Our entire much-praised technological progress, and civilization generally, could be compared to an ax in the hand of a pathological criminal.

— *Albert Einstein*²⁴

1.

A great revolution is brewing; a world revolution. Consider the origin of the two most important revolutions of modern times: the French and the Russian. During the 18th century France was ruled by a monarchical government and a hereditary aristocracy. This regime had originated in the Middle Ages and had been founded on feudal concepts and values — concepts and values suitable for a warlike agrarian society in which power was based principally on heavy cavalry that fought with lance and sword. The regime had been modified over the centuries as political power became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the king. But it retained certain traits that did not vary: It was a conservative regime in which a traditional and hereditary class enjoyed a monopoly on power and prestige.

Meanwhile, the rate of social evolution was accelerating, and by the 18th century it had become unusually rapid. New techniques, new economic structures, and new ideas were appearing with which the old regime in France did not know how to deal. The growing importance of commerce, industry, and technology demanded a regime that would be flexible and capable of adapting itself to rapid changes; therefore, a social and political structure in which power and prestige would belong not to those who had inherited them but to those who deserved them because of their talents and achievements. At the same time new knowledge, together with new ideas that reached Europe as a result of contact with other cultures, was undermining the old values and beliefs. The philosophers of the so-called Enlightenment were expressing and giving definite form to the new yearnings and anxieties, so that a new system of values incompatible with the old values was being developed. By 1789, France found itself in the grip of an obsolete regime that could not have yielded to the new values without destroying itself; for it was impossible to put these values into practice without throwing off the domination of a hereditary class. Human nature being what it is, it is not surprising that those who constituted the old regime refused to give up their privileges to make way for what was called “progress.” Thus the tension between the old values and the new continued to rise until the breaking-point was reached and a revolution followed.

The prerevolutionary situation of Russia was similar to that of France, except that the Russian regime was even more out-of-date, backward, and rigid than that of France; and in Russia, moreover, there was a revolutionary movement that worked persistently to undermine the regime and the old values. As in France, the old regime in Russia could not have yielded to the new values without ceasing to exist. Because the Tsars and others who constituted the regime naturally refused to give up their privileges, the conflict between the two systems of values was irreconcilable, and the resulting tension rose until a revolution broke out.

The world today is approaching a situation analogous to that of France and Russia prior to their respective revolutions.

²⁴ Quoted by Gordon A. Craig, *The New York Review of Books*, November 4, 1999, page 14.

The values linked with so-called “progress” — that is, with immoderate economic and technological growth — were those that in challenging the values of the old regimes created the tensions that led to the French and Russian Revolutions. The values linked with “progress” have now become the values of another dominating regime: the technoindustrial system that rules the world today. And other new values are emerging that are beginning to challenge in their turn the values of the technoindustrial system. The new values are totally incompatible with technoindustrial values, so that the tension between the two systems of values cannot be relieved through compromise. It is certain that the partisans of technology will not voluntarily give in to the new values. Doing so would entail the sacrifice of everything they live for; they would rather die than yield. If the new values spread and grow strong enough, the tension will rise to a point at which revolution will be the only possible outcome. And there is reason to believe that the new values will indeed spread and grow stronger.

2.

The naive optimism of the 18th century led some people to believe that technological progress would lead to a kind of utopia in which human beings, freed from the need to work in order to support themselves, would devote themselves to philosophy, to science, and to music, literature, and the other fine arts. Needless to say, that is not the way things have turned out.

In discussing the way things *have* turned out, I will refer especially to the United States, which is the country I know best. The United States is technologically the most advanced country in the world. As the other industrialized countries progress, they tend to follow trajectories parallel to that of the United States. So, speaking broadly and with some reservations, we can say that where the United States is today the other industrialized countries will be in the future.²⁵

Instead of using their technological means of production to provide themselves with free time in which to undertake intellectual and artistic work, people today devote themselves to the struggle for status, prestige, and power, and to the accumulation of material goods that serve only as toys. The kind of art and literature in which the average modern American immerses himself is the kind provided by television, movies, and popular novels and magazines; and it is not exactly what the 18th-century optimists had in mind. In effect, American popular culture has been reduced to mere hedonism, and hedonism of a particularly contemptible kind. “Serious” art does exist, but it tends to neurosis, pessimism, and defeatism.

As was to be expected, hedonism has not brought happiness. The spiritual emptiness of the culture of hedonism has left many people deeply dissatisfied. Depression, nervous tension, and anxiety disorders are widespread,²⁶ and for that reason many Americans resort to drugs (legal

²⁵ My correspondent who writes under the pseudonym “Último Reducto” disagrees. he says that the United States, with its “hard capitalism,” is in a certain sense backward: The path of the future is that of Western Europe, which, with its more advanced social-welfare programs, seduces and weakens the average citizen by making his life too soft and easy. This is a plausible opinion, and Último Reducto may well be right. But it is also possible that he is wrong. As technology increasingly frees the system from the need for human work, growing numbers of people will become superfluous and will then constitute no more than a useless burden. The system will have no reason to waste its resources in taking care of the superfluous people, and therefore may find it more efficient to treat them ruthlessly. Thus, possibly, it is the “hard” capitalism of the United States rather than the softer capitalism of Western Europe that points to the future. Only time will tell.

²⁶ In regard to the sickly psychological state of modern man, see, e.g.: “The Science of Anxiety,” *Time*, June 10, 2002, pages 46–54 (anxiety is spreading and afflicts 19 million Americans, page 48; drugs have proven very useful in

or illegal) to alleviate these symptoms, or to modify their mental state in some other way. Other indications of American social sickness are, for example, child abuse and the frequent inability to sleep or to eat normally. And, even among those Americans who seem to have adapted best to modern life, a cynical attitude toward the institutions of their own society is prevalent.

This chronic dissatisfaction and the sickly psychological condition of modern man are not normal and inevitable parts of human existence. We need not idealize the life of primitive peoples or conceal facts that are unpleasant from a modern point of view, such as the high rate of infant mortality or, in some cultures, a violent and warlike spirit. There is nevertheless reason to believe that primitive man was better satisfied with his way of life than modern man is and suffered much less from psychological problems than modern man does. For example, among hunting-and-gathering cultures, *before they were disrupted by the intrusion of industrial society*, child abuse was almost nonexistent.²⁷ And there is evidence that in most of these cultures there was very little anxiety or nervous tension.²⁸

But what is at stake is not only the harm that modern society, does to human beings. The harm done to nature must also be taken into account. Even today, and even though modern man only occasionally comes into contact with her, Nature, our mother, attracts and entrances him and offers him a picture of the greatest and most fascinating beauty. The destruction of the wild natural world is a sin that worries, disturbs, and even horrifies many people. But we don't need to dwell here on the devastation of nature, for the facts are well known: more and more ground covered with pavement instead of herbage, the abnormally accelerated rate of extinction of species, the poisoning of the water and of the atmosphere, and as a result of the latter the

the treatment of anxiety, page 54); "The Perils of Pills," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 6, 2000, pages 45–50 (almost 21 percent of children 9 years old or older have a mental disorder, page 45); "On the Edge on Campus," *U.S. News & World Report*, February 18, 2002, pages 56–57 (the mental health of college students continues to worsen); *Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia*, 1996, Volume 24, page 423 (in the United States the suicide rate of persons between 15 and 24 years old tripled between 1950 and 1990; some psychologists think that growing feelings of isolation and rootlessness, and that life is meaningless, have contributed to the rising suicide rate); "Americanization a Health Risk, Study Says," *Los Angeles Times*, September 15, 1998, pages A1, A19 (a new study reports that Mexican immigrants in the United States have only half as many psychiatric disorders as persons of Mexican descent born in the United States, page A1).

²⁷ E.g.: Gontran de Poncins, *Kabloona*, Time-Life Books, Alexandria, Virginia, 1980, pages 32–33, 36, 157 ("no Eskimo has ever punished a child," page 157); Allan R. Holmberg, *Nomads of the Long Bow: The Siriono of Eastern Bolivia*, The Natural History Press, New York, 1969, pages 204–05 (an unruly child is never beaten; children generally are allowed great latitude for physical expression of aggressive impulses against their parents, who are patient and long-suffering with them); John E. Pfeiffer, *The Emergence of Man*, Harper & Row, New York, 1969, page 317 (The Australian Aborigines practiced infanticide, but: "Nothing is denied to the children who are reared. Whenever they want food...they get it. Aborigine mothers rarely spank or otherwise punish their offspring, even under the most provoking circumstances.")

On the other hand, the Mbuti of Africa did not hesitate to give their children hard slaps. Colin Turnbull, *The Forest People*, Simon And Schuster, 1962, pages 65, 129, 157. But this is the only example that I know of among hunting-and-gathering cultures of what by present standards could be considered child abuse. And I don't think that it was abuse in the context of Mbuti culture, because the Mbuti had little hesitation about hitting one another and they often did hit one another, so that among them a blow did not have the same psychological significance that it has among us: a blow did not humiliate. Or so it seems to me on the basis of what I've read about the Mbuti.

²⁸ E.g., Gontran de Poncins, *op. cit.*, pages 212, 273, 292 ("their minds were at rest, and they slept the sleep of the unworried," page 273; "Of course he would not worry. He was an Eskimo," page 292). Still, there have existed hunting-and-gathering cultures in which anxiety was indeed a serious problem; for example, the Ainu of Japan. Carleton S. Coon, *The Hunting Peoples*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1971, pages 372–73.

alteration even of the Earth's climate, the ultimate consequences of which cannot be foreseen and may turn out to be disastrous.²⁹

Which reminds us that the unrestrained growth of technology threatens the very survival of the human race. Human society, together with its worldwide environment, constitutes a system of the greatest complexity, and in a system as complex as this the consequences of a given change cannot in general be predicted.³⁰ And modern technology is in the process of bringing about the most profound changes in human society as well as in its physical and biological environment. That the consequences of such changes are unpredictable has been demonstrated not only theoretically, but also through experience. For example, no one could have predicted in advance that modern changes, through mechanisms that still have not been definitely determined, would lead to an epidemic of allergies.³¹

When a complex and more-or-less stable system is disturbed through some important change, the results commonly are destabilizing and therefore harmful. For example, it is known that genetic mutations of living organisms (unless merely insignificant) are almost always harmful; only rarely are they beneficial to the organism. Thus, as technology introduces greater and greater "mutations" into the "organism" that is biosphere (the totality of all living things on Earth), the harm done by these "mutations" becomes correspondingly greater and greater. No one but a fool can deny that the continual introduction, through technological progress, of ever-greater changes in the system of Man-plus-Earth is in the highest degree dangerous, foolhardy, and rash.

Still, I am not one of those who predict a worldwide physical and biological disaster that will bring down the entire technoindustrial system within the next few decades. The risk of such a disaster is real and serious, but at present we do not know whether it will actually occur. Nevertheless, if a disaster of this kind does not come upon us, it is practically certain that there will be a disaster of another kind: the loss of our humanity.

Technological progress not only is changing man's environment, his culture, and his way of life; it is changing man himself. For a human being is in large part a product of the conditions in which he lives. In the future, assuming that the technological system continues its development, the conditions in which man lives will be so profoundly different from the conditions in which he has lived previously that they will have to transform man himself.

The yearning for freedom, attachment to nature, courage, honor, honesty, morality, friendship, love and all of the other social instincts...even free will itself: all of these human qualities, valued in the highest degree from the dawn of the human race, evolved through the millennia because they were appropriate and useful in the primitive circumstances in which people lived. But today, so-called "progress" is changing the circumstances of human life to such an extent that these formerly advantageous qualities are becoming obsolete and useless. Consequently, they will disappear or will be transformed into something totally different and to us alien. This

²⁹ See, e.g., Elizabeth Kolbert, "Ice Memory," *The New Yorker*, January 7, 2002, pages 30–37.

³⁰ Roberto Vacca, *The Coming Dark Age*, translated by J. S. Whale, Doubleday, 1973, page 13 ("Jay W. Forrester of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has shown that in the field of complex systems, cause-to-effect relationships are very difficult to analyse: hardly ever does one given parameter depend on just one other factor. What happens is that all factors and parameters are interrelated by multiple feedback loops, the structure of which is far from obvious...")

³¹ "Allergy Epidemic," *U.S. News & World Report*, May 8, 2000, pages 47–53. "Allergies: A Modern Epidemic," *National Geographic*, May 2006, pages 116–135.

phenomenon can already be observed: Among the American middle class, the concept of honor has practically vanished, courage is little valued, friendship almost always lacks depth, honesty is decaying,³² and freedom seems to be identified, in the opinion of some people, with obedience to the rules. And bear in mind that this is only the beginning of the beginning.

It can be assumed that the human being will continue to change at an accelerating rate, because the evolution of an organism is very swift when its environment is suddenly transformed. Beyond that, man is transforming himself, as well as other living organisms, through the agency of biotechnology. Today, so-called “designer babies” are in fashion in the United States. A woman who wants a baby having certain characteristics, for example, intelligence, athletic ability, blond hair, or tall stature, comes to an agreement with another woman who has the desired characteristics. The latter donates an egg (usually in exchange for a sum of money — there are women who make a business of this) which is implanted in the uterus of the first woman so that nine months later she will give birth to a child having — it is hoped — the desired traits.³³ There is no room for doubt that, as biotechnology advances, babies will be designed more and more effectively through genetic modification of eggs and sperm cells,³⁴ so that human beings will come more and more to resemble planned and manufactured products instead of free creations of Nature. Apart from the fact that this is extremely offensive to our sense of what a person should be, its social and biological consequences will be profound and unforeseeable; therefore in all probability disastrous.

But maybe this won’t matter in the long run, because it is quite possible that human beings will some day become obsolete. There are distinguished scientists who believe that within a few decades computer experts will have succeeded in producing machines more intelligent than human beings. If this actually happens, then human beings will be superfluous and obsolete, and it is likely that the system will dispense with them.³⁵

Although it is not certain that this will happen, it is certain that immoderate economic growth and the mad, headlong advance of technology are overturning everything, and it is hardly possible to conceive how the final result can be anything other than disastrous.

3.

In the countries that have been industrialized longest, such as England, Germany, and above all the United States, there is a growing understanding that the technological system is taking us down the road to disaster.

When I was a boy in the 1950s, practically everyone gladly or even enthusiastically welcomed progress, economic growth, and above all technology, and believed without reservation that they

³² In regard to the decay of honesty in the United States, see an interesting article by Mary McNamara, *Los Angeles Times*, August 27, 1998, pages E1, E4.

³³ Rebecca Mead, “Eggs for Sale,” *The New Yorker*, August 9, 1999, pages 56–65.

³⁴ “Redesigning Dad,” *U.S. News & World Report*, November 5, 2001, pages 62–63 (sperm cells may be the best place in which to repair defective genes; the technology is nearly ready).

³⁵ See Bill Joy, “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us,” *Wired*, April 2000, pages 238–262. One should not have too much confidence in predictions of miraculous advances such as the development of intelligent machines. For example, in 1970 scientists predicted that within 15 years there would be machines more intelligent than human beings. *Chicago Daily News*, November 16, 1970 (page citation not available). Obviously this prediction did not come true. Nonetheless, it would be foolish to discount the possibility of machines more intelligent than human beings. In fact, there is reason to believe that such machines will indeed exist some day if the technological system continues to develop.

were purely beneficial. A German I know has told me that the same attitude toward technology was prevalent in Germany at that time, and we may assume that the same was true throughout the industrialized world.

But with the passage of time this attitude has been changing. Needless to say, most people don't even have an attitude toward technology because they don't take the trouble to apply their minds to it; they just accept it unthinkingly. But in the United States and among thoughtful people — those who do take the trouble to reflect seriously on the problems of the society in which they live — attitudes toward technology have changed profoundly and continue to change. Those who are enthusiastic about technology are in general those who expect to profit from it personally in some way, such as scientists, engineers, military men, and corporation executives. The attitude of many other people is apathetic or cynical: they know of the dangers and the social decay that so-called progress brings with it, but they think that progress is inevitable and that any attempt to resist it is useless.

All the same, there are growing numbers of people, especially young people, who are not so pessimistic or so passive. They refuse to accept the destruction of their world, and they are looking for new values that will free them from the yoke of the present technoindustrial system.³⁶ This movement is still formless and has hardly begun to jell; the new values are still vague and poorly defined. But as technology advances along its mad and destructive path, and as the damage it does becomes ever more obvious and disturbing, it is to be expected that the movement will grow and acquire firmness, and will reinforce its values, making them more precise. These values, to judge by present appearances and also by what such values logically ought to be, will probably take a form somewhat like the following:

- i. Rejection of all modern technology. This is logically necessary, because modern technology is a whole in which all parts are interconnected; you can't get rid of the bad parts without also giving up those parts that seem good. Like a complex living organism, the technological system either lives or dies; it can't remain half alive and half dead for any length of time.
- ii. Rejection of civilization itself. This too is logical, because the present technological civilization is only the most recent stage of the ongoing process of civilization, and earlier civilizations already contained the seed of the evils that today are becoming so great and so dangerous.
- iii. Rejection of materialism,³⁷ and its replacement with a conception of life that values moderation and self-sufficiency while deprecating the acquisition of property or of status. The

³⁶ See Bruce Barcott, "From Tree-hugger to Terrorist," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, April 7, 2002, pages 56–59, 81. This article describes the development of what may become within a few years a real and effective revolutionary movement committed to the overthrow of the technoindustrial system. (Since writing the foregoing several years ago, I've had to conclude that no effective movement of this kind is emerging in the United States. Capable leadership is lacking, and the real revolutionaries have failed to separate themselves from the pseudo-revolutionaries. But Bruce Barcott's article, along with information from other sources, shows that the raw material for a real revolutionary movement does exist: There are people with sufficient passion and commitment who are willing to take risks and make great sacrifices. Only a few able leaders would be needed to form this raw material into an effective movement.)

³⁷ Último Reducto has pointed out a possible ambiguity in this phrase. To eliminate it, I need to explain that the word "materialism" here refers not to philosophical materialism but to values that exalt the acquisition of material possessions.

rejection of materialism is a necessary part of the rejection of technological civilization, because only technological civilization can provide the material goods to which modern man is addicted.

- iv. Love and reverence toward nature, or even worship of nature. Nature is the opposite of technological civilization, which threatens death to nature. It is therefore logical to set up nature as a positive value in opposition to the negative value of technology. Moreover, reverence toward or adoration of nature may fill the spiritual vacuum of modern society.
- v. Exaltation of freedom. Of all the things of which modern civilization deprives us, freedom and intimacy with nature are the most precious. In fact, ever since the human race submitted to the servitude of civilization, freedom has been the most frequent and most insistent demand of rebels and revolutionaries throughout the ages.
- vi. Punishment of those responsible for the present situation. The scientists, engineers, corporation executives, politicians, and so forth who consciously and intentionally promote technological progress and economic growth are criminals of the worst kind. They are worse than Stalin or Hitler, who never even dreamed of anything approaching what today's technophiles are doing. Therefore justice and punishment will be demanded.

The movement in opposition to the technoindustrial system should develop something more or less similar to the foregoing set of values; and in fact there is much evidence of the emergence of such values. Clearly these values are totally incompatible with the survival of technological civilization, just as the values that emerged prior to the French and Russian Revolutions were totally incompatible with the survival of the old regimes of those countries. As the damage done by the technoindustrial system grows worse, it is to be expected that the new values that oppose it will spread and become stronger. If the tension between technological values and the new values rises high enough, and if a suitable occasion presents itself, what happened in France and Russia will happen again: A revolution will break out.

4.

But I don't predict a revolution; it remains to be seen whether one will occur. There are several factors that may stand in the way of revolution, among them the following:

- a. Lack of belief in the possibility of revolution. Most people take it for granted that the existing system is invulnerable and that nothing can divert it from its appointed path. It never occurs to them that revolution might be a real possibility. History shows that human beings commonly will submit to any injustice, however outrageous, if the people around them submit and everyone believes there is no way out. On the other hand, once the hope of a way out has arisen, in many cases a revolution follows.

Thus, paradoxically, the greatest obstacle to a revolution against the technoindustrial system is the very belief that such a revolution cannot happen. If enough people come to believe that a revolution is possible, then it will be possible in reality.

- b. Propaganda. The technological society possesses a system of propaganda, made possible by modern media of communications, that is more powerful and effective than that of any earlier society.³⁸ This system of propaganda makes more difficult the revolutionary task of undermining technoindustrial values.
- c. The pseudorevolutionaries. At present there are too many people who pride themselves on being rebels without really being committed to the overthrow of the existing system. They only play at rebellion or revolution in order to satisfy their own psychological needs. These pseudorevolutionaries may form an obstacle to the emergence of an effective revolutionary movement.
- d. Cowardice. Modern society has taught us to be passive and obedient, and to be horrified at physical violence. Moreover, the conditions of modern life are conducive to laziness, softness, and cowardice. Those who want to be revolutionaries will have to overcome these weaknesses.

Note

I wrote “The Coming Revolution” several years ago at the suggestion of a young Spanish man, and I wrote it in Spanish. Here, obviously, I’ve translated it into English.

As I originally wrote the notes to “The Coming Revolution” many of them contained direct quotations, translated into Spanish, from English language sources. If I translated these quotations back into English, the results certainly would not be identical with the original English-language versions. Therefore, where possible, I have returned to the original English-language sources in order to quote them accurately. However, in several cases I no longer have access to the English-language materials in question, and in such cases I’ve had to use paraphrases in these notes rather than direct quotations. But material enclosed in quotation marks always is quoted verbatim.

Technological Slavery — Kaczynski, Theodore J.

³⁸ See the interesting article “Propaganda”; *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume 26, 15th edition, 1997, pages 171–79. This article reveals the impressive sophistication of modern propaganda.

Ted Kaczynski Letter to an Anonymous German

Ted Kaczynski's thoughts on revolution, anti-tech ideology, and green anarchists

Ted Kaczynski

2017

Ted Kaczynski's thoughts on revolution, anti-tech ideology, and green anarchists in a letter to a German.

There are two difficulties connected with the characteristic victimization issues of the left, such as the alleged oppression of women, homosexuals, racial or ethnic minorities, and animals.

First, these issues distract attention from the technology problem. Rebellious energies that might have been directed against the technological system are expended instead on the irrelevant problems of racism, sexism, etc. Therefore it would have been better if these problems had been completely solved. In that case they could not have distracted attention from the technology problem.

But revolutionists should not attempt to solve the problems of racism, sexism, and so forth, because, in addressing these problems, they would further distract attention from the problem of technology. Furthermore, revolutionists could contribute very little to the solution of the problems of women, minorities, etc., because technological society itself is already working to solve these problems. Every day (at least in the United States) the media teach us that women are equal to men, that homosexuals should be respected, that all races should receive equal treatment, and so forth. Hence, any efforts in this direction by revolutionists would be superfluous. Through their obsessive concentration on victimization issues such as the alleged oppression of women, homosexuals, and racial minorities, leftists vastly increase the extent to which these issues distract attention from the technology problem. But it would be counterproductive for revolutionists to try to obstruct leftists' efforts to solve the problems of women, minorities, and so forth, because such obstruction would intensify the controversy over these issues and therefore would distract even more attention from the technology problem.

Instead, revolutionists must repeatedly point out and emphasize that the energy expended on the leftists' victimization issues is wasted, and that that energy should be expended on the technological problem.

A second difficulty connected with victimization issues is that any group that concerns itself which such issues will attract leftists. As the Manifesto argues, leftists are useless as revolutionists because most of them don't really want to overthrow the existing form of society.

They are interested only in satisfying their own psychological needs through vehement advocacy of "causes." Any cause will do as long as it is not specifically right-wing.

Thus, when any movement (other than a right-wing movement) arises that aspires to be revolutionary, leftists come swarming to it like flies to honey until they outnumber the original members of the movement, take it over, and transform it into a leftist movement. Thereafter the movement is useless for revolutionary purposes. The case of the movement called Earth First! provides a neat example of this process. (See Martha F. Lee, *Earth First!: Environmental Apocalypse*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, New York, 1995.) Thus, the left serves as a mechanism for emasculating nascent revolutionary movements and rendering them harmless.

Therefore, in order to form an effective movement, revolutionists must take pains to exclude leftists from the movement. In order to drive away leftists, revolutionists should not only avoid involvement in efforts to help women, homosexuals, or racial minorities; they should specifically disavow any interest in such issues, and they should emphasize again and again that women, homosexuals, racial minorities, and so forth should consider themselves lucky because our society treats them better than most earlier societies have done. By adopting this position, revolutionists will separate themselves from the left and discourage leftists from attempting to join them.

You seem to think that increasing the pressure to which people are subject in modern society will be sufficient to produce a revolution. But this is not correct. Certainly a serious grievance must be present in order for a revolution to occur, but a serious grievance, or even the greatest suffering, by itself is not sufficient to bring about a revolution. People who have studied the process of revolution are agreed that in addition to a grievance, some precipitating factor is necessary. The precipitating factor might be a dynamic leader, some extraordinary event, or anything that arouses new hope that rebellion can bring relief from the grievance.

Thus Trotsky wrote:

<quote>"In reality the mere existence of privations is not enough to cause an insurrection...It is necessary that...new conditions and new ideas should open the prospect of a revolutionary way out."³⁹</quote>

In the opinion of the philosopher-sociologist Eric Hoffer: "[T]he presence of an outstanding leader is indispensable. Without him there will be no movement. The ripeness of the times does not automatically produce a mass movement..."⁴⁰

Similarly the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "The rank and file of any group; especially a big one, have been shown to be remarkably passive until aroused by quasi-parental leaders whom they admire and trust."⁴¹

Of course, the prerequisites for revolution are much more complex than the mere presence of dynamic leaders or of "new conditions and new ideas" that arouse hope. For an extended discussion, see Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior*, Macmillan Company, New York, 1971, pages 313-384. The point is, however, that revolutionists cannot simply wait passively for

³⁹ Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, translated by Max Eastman (three volumes in one), Pathfinder, New York, 1980, Vol. Two, page vii.

⁴⁰ Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer*, § 90.

⁴¹ The New *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, 2003, Vol. 26, article "Propaganda," page 175.

hard conditions to produce a revolution. Instead, revolutionists must actively prepare the way for revolution.

I should add that the remarks about leftism, here and in the Manifesto, are based on observation of the American left. I do not know whether the remarks can be applied without modification to the European left.

You write: "Let us not deceive ourselves about the real role of women." If you mean that motherhood is the only suitable role for women, then I disagree. Quite apart from child-rearing, women have always done very important, even indispensable work, and work that was often very hard physically or required great skill. To mention only a few examples: Among the Mbuti pygmies of Africa and exclusive of child-rearing, the women worked far more than the men, they provided the greater part of the food, they built the huts, and their work was often very hard. Among other things, they carried huge stacks of firewood into camp on their backs.⁴² The women of hunting-and-gathering societies of warm climates usually provided the greater part of the food, whereas in cold countries the men provided the greater part through hunting.⁴³ But in cold countries the women produced the clothing,⁴⁴ which in such climates was indispensable, and in doing so the women of certain hunting-and-gathering societies showed extraordinary skill.⁴⁵

Thus, without denying the importance of their role as mothers, we must also acknowledge the importance of the role of women as laborers and skilled handworkers. And moreover I maintain that women, just as much as men, need work, that is, activities directed toward a goal (the "power process").⁴⁶ And I suspect that the reason why today's women want to take up masculine occupations is that their role as mother is not enough to satisfy them now that technology has reduced other traditional feminine occupations to triviality. The modern woman doesn't need to make clothes, because she can buy them; she doesn't need to weave baskets, because she has at her disposal any number of good containers; she doesn't need to look for fruits, nuts, and roots in the forest, because she can purchase good food; and so forth.

You write: "The system operates so insidiously that it talks ethnic minorities into believing that the loss of their identity is a good thing. Minorities are manipulated to their own disadvantage, and entirely without any perceptible compulsion." Yes, I agree with this, except that in some countries the system is more cunning: Instead of telling ethnic minorities that the loss of their identity is a good thing it tells them to maintain their ethnic identity, but at the same time the system knows very well how to drain ethnic identity of its real content and reduce it to empty external forms. This has happened both in the United States⁴⁷ and in the Soviet Union.

Of course, I know very little about German universities, but American university intellectuals, apart from rare exceptions, are not at all suited to be members of an effective revolutionary

⁴² Paul Schebesta, *Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri*, II. Band, I. Teil, Institut Royal Colonial Beige, Brussels, 1941, pages 11-21, 31, 142, 170.

⁴³ Carleton S. Coon, *The Hunting Peoples*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston and Toronto, 1971, pages 72-73. Elizabeth Cashdan, "Hunters and Gatherers: Economic Behavior in Bands," in S. Plattner, *Economic Anthropology*, Stanford University Press, 1989, page 28.

⁴⁴ Coon, op. cit., page 48.

⁴⁵ Gontran de Poncins, *Kabloona*, Time-Life Books, Alexandria, Virginia, USA, 1980, pages 14, 15, 124.

⁴⁶ *Industrial Society and its Future*, paragraphs 33-37.

⁴⁷ See *Industrial Society and its Future*, paragraph 29.

movement. The majority belong to the left. Some of these intellectuals might make themselves useful by spreading ideas about the technology problem, but most of them are frightened at the idea of the overthrow of the system and cannot be active revolutionaries. They are the “men of words” of whom Eric Hoffer has spoken:

The preliminary work of undermining existing institutions, of familiarizing the masses with the idea of change, and of creating a receptivity to a new faith, can be done only by men who are, first and foremost, talkers or writers...Thus imperceptibly the man of words undermines the established institutions, discredits those in power, weakens prevailing beliefs and loyalties, and sets the stage for the rise of a mass movement.⁴⁸

When the old order begins to fall apart, many of the vociferous men of words, who prayed so long for the day, are in a funk. The first glimpse of the face of anarchy frightens them out of their wits.⁴⁹

The creative man of words, no matter how bitterly he may criticize and deride the existing order, is actually attached to the present. His passion is to reform and not to destroy. When the mass movement remains wholly in his keeping, he turns it into a mild affair. The reforms he initiates are of the surface, and life flows on without a sudden break.⁵⁰

You write: “The movement should be a completely new beginning, beyond all positions of the left and of the right.” Yes indeed! I agree completely!

You’re right: We need to worry about the time factor. But we also have to take into consideration the possibility that the struggle will last a very long time, perhaps many decades. We should overthrow the system as soon as possible, but we must nevertheless prepare ourselves for a long-term revolutionary effort, because it may turn out that no quick overthrow of the system will be feasible.

You point out that technological progress proceeds at lightning speed; that it will take perhaps twenty years to develop the first computers that will surpass every human brain in computing power; that genetic engineering will inevitably be applied for the “improvement” of human beings; that new drugs will be developed. All of this may be true. But the future may be different from what we expect. For example:

<quote>A scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology believes that within eight years a machine with more intelligence than the genius level will be developed...Other scientists...disagreed only on the timetable. They suggested 15 years...</quote>

This is from the newspaper The Chicago Daily News, November 16, 1970. Obviously, what the scientists predicted has not happened. Similarly, attempts to cure certain human diseases by means of genetic technology have run into difficulties: Gene therapy can cause cancer. Thus it is possible that computers may not surpass human

⁴⁸ Hoffer, op. cit., section 104.

⁴⁹ Hoffer, op. cit., section 110.

⁵⁰ Hoffer, op. cit., section 111.

beings in intelligence as soon as is believed; genetic engineering may not be so easily applied to humans; and so forth. On the other hand, it is also possible that these developments will proceed even faster than anyone now suspects. In any case the social consequences of the new technology are unforeseeable and may be different from what we expect. The social consequences of the technological progress that has occurred up to the present time are different from what I expected when I was young. Therefore we have to prepare ourselves for all possibilities, including the possibility that our struggle may last a very long time.

There are two mistakes that almost all people, with the exception of experienced politicians and social scientists, make when they devise a plan for changing society.

The first mistake is that one works out a plan through pure reason, as if one were designing a bridge or a machine, and then one expects the plan to succeed.

One can successfully design a bridge or the like because material objects reliably obey precise rules. Thus one can predict how material objects will react under given circumstances. But in the realm of social phenomena we have at our disposal very few reliable, exact rules; therefore, in general, we cannot reliably predict social phenomena.

Among the few reliable predictions that we can make is the prediction that a plan will not succeed. If you let an automobile without a driver roll down a rough slope, you can't predict the route that the automobile will take, but you can predict that it will not follow a previously selected route. If you release a group of mice from a cage, you can't predict which way each mouse will run, but you can predict that the mice will not march in accord with a previously specified plan. So it goes, in general, in the domain of social phenomena.

Social scientists understand how difficult it is to carry out any longterm plan:

<quote>History has no lessons for the future except one: that nothing ever works out as the participants quite intended or expected.⁵¹

World War 1...ended in various plans for peace as illusory as the plans for war had been. As the historian William McNeill wrote, 'The irrationality of rational, professionalized planning could not have been made more patently manifest.'⁵²

Most social planning is short-term...; the goals of planning are often not attained, and, even if the plan is successful in terms of the stated goals, it often has unforeseen consequences. The wider the scope and the longer the time span of planning, the more difficult it is to attain the goals and to avoid unforeseen and undesired consequences....Large-scale and long-term social developments in any society are still largely unplanned.⁵³</quote>

The foregoing is indisputably true, and moreover it refers to the plan of the State. The State has power, vast quantities of information, and the capacity to analyze and

⁵¹ Gordon S. Wood, "The Making of a Disaster," *The New York Review*, April 28, 2005, page 34.

⁵² *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, 2003, Volume 21, article "International Relations," page 807.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Volume 27, article "Social Structure and Change," page 370

utilize such quantities of information. We have no power and relatively little capacity to gather and analyze information. If it is impossible for the State to carry out a long-term social plan successfully, then all the more is it impossible for us.

Therefore I maintain that revolutionaries should not commit themselves to any pre-determined, long-term or comprehensive plan. Instead, they should as far as possible rely on experience and proceed by trial and error, and commit themselves only to simple, short-term plans. Of course, revolutionaries should also have a comprehensive, long-term plan, but this must always be provisional, and the revolutionaries must always be ready to modify the comprehensive plan or even abandon it altogether, provided that they never forget the final goal, which is to overthrow the system. In other words, the movement must be flexible and prepared for all eventualities.

The second of the above-mentioned errors is that one proposes a plan (let us assume that it is a very good plan) and then believes that a sufficient number of people will follow the plan merely because it is a good one. But if the goal of a plan is to change society, then, however excellent the plan may be, its excellence is not what will move people to follow it. We have to take human motivations into consideration.

In private life pure reason may often move a person to follow a good plan. For example, if through the use of reason we can convince a person that one doctor is more skillful than another, then the person will probably consult the more skillful doctor, because he knows that in this way he will recover better from his ailment.

On the other hand, if we can convince a person that a certain plan will be useful to society provided that a sufficient number of people follow the plan, this provides the person with at most a very weak motive to follow the plan, for he knows that it is very unlikely, or even impossible, that his own individual participation will by itself have any perceptible effect on society. For example: Many people know that it would be better for the world if everyone refused to use automobiles. Nevertheless, apart from rare exceptions, each one of these people has his automobile, because he says to himself that if he refuses to drive he will suffer great inconvenience without doing any perceptible good for the world; for the world will derive no perceptible advantage unless many millions of people refuse to use automobiles.

So we must always bear in mind that, with only rare exceptions, a person joins a revolutionary movement not primarily in order to achieve the movement's objective, but in order to fulfill his own psychological or physical needs or to experience some form of pleasure. However loyal and sincerely devoted he may later be to the revolutionary goal, his devotion has in some way grown out of his own needs or out of the pleasures he has experienced. Of course, the attainment of a movement's goal can fulfill the needs of a member, but in general only the actions of a few leaders can perceptibly increase the likelihood that the goal will be attained. As previously indicated, the rank-and-file member knows that his own individual participation will have at most only an imperceptible effect on the progress toward the goal. Therefore the goal by itself, and through cold reason alone, cannot motivate the rank-and-file member.

Since enthusiasm produces great pleasure, enthusiasm for a strongly desired goal can be enough to move a person to revolutionary action, but only when the attainment of the goal is very near. When the attainment of the goal appears to be improbable or distant in time, the goal by itself cannot arouse much enthusiasm.

When the attainment of the goal is not near, then the following satisfactions, for example, can motivate the rank-and-file member of a revolutionary movement:

1. Sense of purpose, the feeling that one has a goal around which to organize one's life.
2. Sense of power.
3. Sense of belonging, the feeling of being part of a cohesive social group.
4. Status or prestige within the movement; the approval of other members of the movement.
5. Anger, revenge; the opportunity to retaliate against the system.

Of course, one can also find satisfaction in one's contribution to the future attainment of the revolutionary goal, even if one's own individual contribution has only an imperceptible effect, but in that case the satisfaction is too weak to move anyone to make significant revolutionary efforts—apart from rare, exceptional cases. Therefore a revolutionary movement must be based chiefly on other motivations.

As for the sense of power—a cell consisting of ten people cannot afford a member much sense of power. The member will gain a sense of power only when he joins the power-holding circles of society, and then the member receives his sense of power not from the revolutionary movement but from his position within the system. He has perhaps one chance in a hundred of gaining a position of power, and he can reach such a position only through efforts extending over a long period.

A person will undertake such efforts and persist in them only if he finds satisfaction in his career. Let us assume, then, that a member of a revolutionary cell has had a successful career and after twenty years of effort has joined the power-holding circles. He likes his career, he now has power, and he has achieved these satisfactions through long years of effort. Will he want to lose all this through the destruction of the system? In rare, exceptional cases he will, but usually he will not. History offers countless examples of the young, hot-blooded rebel who swears to resist the system forever, but who then has a successful career, and when he is older and richer and has status and prestige, he comes to the conclusion that the system is not so bad after all, and that it is better to adapt himself to it.

There are further reasons to believe that your plan cannot succeed. The plan requires that the movement should remain secret and unknown to the public. But that is impossible. One can be quite sure that some member of the movement will change his mind or make a mistake, so that the existence of the movement will become publicly known. Then there will be official investigations and so forth. In history one finds examples of sophisticated spy networks, the secrecy of which was carefully guarded, but which nevertheless became known, though some of their cells may have

succeeded in remaining secret. The existence of the movement that you propose likewise would surely become known.

In the fourth section of your letter you propose that leaders and agitators from the ranks of the leftists should be “instructed” by members of the movement. But, apart from exceptional cases, it is impossible to believe that members of the movement could have so much control over people who have the ability to become successful leaders and agitators.

If you succeeded in infiltrating into the power-holding circles just three or four revolutionaries who, moreover, did not subsequently betray the revolution in order to keep their power and their prestige, that would be an amazing success. Such infiltrators could perhaps play a role in the revolution, but their role probably would not be decisive.

You say that revolutions are never planned on a drawing-board, and you are right. But I wouldn't say that revolutions have always been attributable to the dissatisfactions of some large segment of a society. Dissatisfaction is a precondition for revolution, but dissatisfaction by itself is not enough to bring about a revolution. I've emphasized that previously. Among other things a revolutionary myth is needed, and on this subject you write that revolutions have never chosen their ideals and myths freely, which is quite true. But then you write: “The circumstances under which people live leave them no other choice than to adopt exactly these myths and ideals and no others.” I do not entirely agree with this. A myth can't be chosen arbitrarily. A myth can succeed only if it responds to the prevailing (perhaps in part unconscious) dissatisfactions and yearnings. But I'm not convinced that the circumstances under which people live always must precisely determine a single myth. For example: The Prophet Mohammed created an extraordinarily successful myth when he wrote the Koran. Would you venture to say that nothing other than precisely the Koran could have responded to the yearnings of the Arabs?

Even if you were right and for each revolution only a single myth were possible, still we would not be entitled to assume that people would develop the right myth on their own, and develop it in time. The myths of the French and Russian revolutions were not developed by the people at large, but by a small number of intellectuals. Maybe the work of the intellectuals consisted only in giving form and structure to the formless or unconscious dissatisfactions and yearnings of the nation; nevertheless, this work was indispensable for the success of the revolution.

So I maintain that the task of revolutionaries is not to increase or intensify the objective grounds for dissatisfaction. There are already plenty enough grounds for dissatisfaction. Instead, revolutionaries should do the following:

1. There are certain counterfeit grounds for dissatisfaction (e.g., the alleged problems of women, ethnic minorities, homosexuals, cruelty to animals, etc.), that serve to divert attention from the real grounds for dissatisfaction. Revolutionaries must somehow circumvent or negate these diversionary tactics.

2. Revolutionaries must bring into effective operation the genuine but as yet poorly perceived grounds for dissatisfaction.
3. To this end revolutionaries must (among other things) develop a revolutionary myth. This doesn't mean that they should invent a myth arbitrarily. Instead, they must discover and bring to light the real myth that already exists in inchoate form, and give it a definite structure.</quote>

You are right in saying that the role of the revolutionaries is only that of a catalyst. Revolutionaries can't create a revolution from nothing. All they can do is realize those possibilities that are offered by the conditions under which people live, just as a catalyst can bring about a chemical reaction only if all of the necessary reagents are available. You seem to believe that one can best play the role of a catalyst by intensifying the objective grounds for dissatisfaction. But I am convinced that the objective grounds for dissatisfaction are already sufficient. In order to play the role of a catalyst one must achieve a psychological effect; for example, by discovering and utilizing the right myth.

There are many young people who recognize that the technological system is destroying our world and our freedom; they want to resist it, but they know that they can't achieve anything alone, therefore they look for a group or a movement that they can join. Under the circumstances existing today, they can find no groups or movements other than the leftist or similar ones. So a young person joins one of these groups and either is converted to its ideology or else gets discouraged, leaves the group, gives up, and becomes apathetic. What is needed is a real revolutionary movement that such young people could join before they are lured by some leftist group and ruined by it.

Speeding up the system. It is not always safer to proceed on the assumption that the worst case will occur. For example: We are on a ship that is sinking. The "worst case" is that the ship will sink within two minutes. So we immediately throw the boat into the water, jump into the boat and row hurriedly away from the ship. Then we notice that we are going to die because we haven't taken any food or water with us. It would have been better to provide ourselves with food and water instead of rowing away in such a hurry, for the ship has not sunk as fast as we feared. But now it's too late...

So we should not prepare ourselves for the worst case only but, as far as possible, for all cases.

You maintain that we should speed up the action of "the machine" (that is, of the system) so that the machine will destroy itself. But in destroying itself the machine will also destroy us and our world, and perhaps all higher forms of life. Remember that not all of the destructive processes initiated

by the system will stop as soon as the system falls apart. Consider for example the greenhouse effect.

<quote>[G]lobal climate systems are booby-trapped with tipping points and feedback loops, thresholds past which the slow creep of environmental decay gives way to sudden and self-perpetuating collapse. Pump enough CO₂ into the sky, and that last part per million of greenhouse gas behaves like the 212th degree Fahrenheit [212° Fahrenheit = 100° Celsius] that turns a pot of hot water into a plume of billowing steam...Things are happening a lot faster than anyone predicted, says Bill Chameides, chief scientist for the advocacy group Environmental Defense and a former professor of atmospheric chemistry. The last 12 months have been alarming, adds Ruth Curry of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts. The ripple through the scientific community is palpable...Is it too late to reverse the changes global warming has wrought? That's still not clear... (Time magazine, April 3, 2006, pages 35, 36.)</quote>

By releasing so much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, the system has already disrupted the Earth's climate to such an extent that even specialists in the field can't predict the consequences. Even if the system immediately stopped releasing carbon dioxide, the Earth's climate probably would not revert to its previous condition. No one knows where our climate will go. We don't even know for certain whether the Earth will still be inhabitable at the end of this century. Of course, the more carbon dioxide the system releases, the greater the danger is. Yes, the system could destroy itself by progressing faster and releasing greater quantities of carbon dioxide, but in the process it would destroy everything else, too.

I have already emphasized that what could lead to a revolution would not be the worsening of living conditions, but a psychological situation conducive to revolution. And one of the indispensable psychological preconditions for revolution is that people should have hope. If there's no hope, there will be no revolution. A serious problem is the fact that many of the most intelligent people have already lost hope. They think that it's too late, the Earth can't be saved. If we speeded up the destructive action of the system, we would only spread and deepen this hopelessness.

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/letter-ted-kaczynski-to-an-anonymous-german/>

The System's Neatest Trick

Ted Kaczynski

The supreme luxury of the society of technical necessity will be to grant the bonus of useless revolt and of an acquiescent smile. —Jacques Ellul⁵⁴

The System has played a trick on today's would-be revolutionaries and rebels. The trick is so cute that if it had been consciously planned one would have to admire it for its almost mathematical elegance.

1. What the System Is Not

Let's begin by making clear that the System is not. The System is not George W. Bush and his advisers and appointees, it is not the cops who maltreat protesters, it is not the CEOs of the multinational corporations, and it is not the Frankensteins in their laboratories who criminally tinker with the genes of living things. All of these people are servants of the System, but in themselves they do not constitute the System. In particular, the personal and individual values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of any of these people may be significantly in conflict with the needs of the System.

To illustrate with an example, the System requires respect for property rights, yet CEOs, cops, scientists, and politicians sometimes steal. (In speaking of stealing we don't have to confine ourselves to actual lifting of physical objects. We can include all illegal means of acquiring property, such as cheating on income tax, accepting bribes, and any other form of graft or corruption.) But the fact that CEOs, cops, scientists, and politicians sometimes steal does not mean that stealing is part of the System. On the contrary, when a cop or a politician steals something he is rebelling against the System's requirement of respect for law and property. Yet, even when they are stealing, these people remain servants of the System as long as they publicly maintain their support for law and property.

Whatever illegal acts may be committed by politicians, cops, or CEOs as individuals, theft, bribery, and graft are not part of the System but diseases of the System. The less stealing there is, the better the System functions, and that is why the servants and boosters of the System always advocate obedience to the law in public, even if they may sometimes find it convenient to break the law in private.

Take another example. Although the police are the System's enforcers police brutality is not part of the System. When the cops beat the crap out of a suspect they are not doing the System's work, they are only letting out their own anger and hostility. The System's goal is not brutality or the expression of anger. As far as police work is concerned, the System's goal is to compel obedience to its rules and to do so with the least possible amount of disruption, violence, and bad publicity. Thus, from the System's point of view, the ideal cop is one who never gets angry, never uses any more violence than necessary, and as far as possible relies on manipulation rather than force to keep people under control. Police brutality is only another disease of the System, not part of the System.

For proof, look at the attitude of the media. The mainstream media almost universally condemn police brutality. Of course, the attitude of the mainstream media represents, as a rule, the consensus of opinion among the powerful classes in our society as to what is good for the System.

⁵⁴ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, translated by John Wilkinson, published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1964, page 427.

What has just been said about theft, graft, and police brutality applies also to issues of discrimination and victimization such as racism, sexism, homophobia, poverty, and sweatshops. All of these are bad for the System. For example, the more that black people feel themselves scorned or excluded, the more likely they are to turn to crime and the less likely they are to educate themselves for careers that will make them useful to the System.

Modern technology, with its rapid long-distance transportation and its disruption of traditional ways of life, has led to the mixing of populations, so that nowadays people of different races, nationalities, cultures, and religions have to live and work side by side. If people hate or reject one another on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, etc., the resulting conflicts interfere with the functioning of the System. Apart from a few old fossilized relics of the past like Jesse Helms, the leaders of the System know this very well, and that is why we are taught in school and through the media to believe that racism, sexism, homophobia, and so forth are social evils to be eliminated.

No doubt some of the leaders of the System, some of the politicians, scientists, and CEOs, privately feel that a woman's place is in the home, or that homosexuality and interracial marriage are repugnant. But even if the majority of them felt that way it would not mean that racism, sexism, and homophobia were part of the System—any more than the existence of stealing among the leaders means that stealing is part of the System. Just as the System must promote respect for law and property for the sake of its own security, the System must also discourage racism and other forms of victimization, for the same reason. That is why the System, notwithstanding any private deviations by individual members of the elite, is basically committed to suppressing discrimination and victimization.

For proof, look again at the attitude of the mainstream media. In spite of occasional timid dissent by a few of the more daring and reactionary commentators, media propaganda overwhelmingly favors racial and gender equality and acceptance of homosexuality and interracial marriage.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Even the most superficial review of the mass media in modern industrialized countries, or even in countries that merely aspire to modernity, will confirm that the System is committed to eliminating discrimination in regard to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc., etc., etc. It would be easy to find thousands of examples that illustrate this, but here we cite only three, from three disparate countries.

United States: "Public Displays of Affection," *U.S. News & World Report*, September 9, 2002, pages 42-43. This article provides a nice example of the way propaganda functions. It takes an ostensibly objective or neutral position on homosexual partnerships, giving some space to the views of those who oppose public acceptance of homosexuality. But anyone reading the article, with its distinctly sympathetic treatment of a homosexual couple, will be left with the impression that acceptance of homosexuality is desirable and, in the long run, inevitable. Particularly important is the photograph of the homosexual couple in question: A physically attractive pair has been selected and has been photographed attractively. No one with the slightest understanding of propaganda can fail to see that the article constitutes propaganda in favor of acceptance of homosexuality. And bear in mind that *U.S. News & World Report* is a right-of-center magazine.

Russia: "Putin Denounces Intolerance," *The Denver Post*, July 26, 2002, page 16A. "MOSCOW—President Vladimir Putin strongly denounced racial and religious prejudice on Thursday...If we let this chauvinistic bacteria of either national or religious intolerance develop, we will ruin the country", Putin said in remarks prominently replayed on Russian television on Thursday night." Etc., etc.

Mexico: "Persiste racismo contra indígenas" ("Racism against indigenous people persists"), *El Sol de México*, January 11, 2002, page 1/B. Photo caption: "In spite of efforts to give dignity to the indigenous people of our country, they continue to suffer discrimination..." The article reports on the efforts of the bishops of Mexico to combat discrimination, but says that the bishops want to "purity" indigenous customs in order to liberate the women from their traditionally inferior status. *El Sol de México* is reputed to be a right-of-center newspaper.

The System needs a population that is meek, nonviolent, domesticated, docile, and obedient. It needs to avoid any conflict or disruption that could interfere with the orderly functioning of the social machine. In addition to suppressing racial, ethnic, religious, and other group hostilities, it also has to suppress or harness for its own advantage all other tendencies that could lead to disruption or disorder, such as machismo, aggressive impulses, and any inclination to violence.

Naturally, traditional racial and ethnic antagonisms die slowly, machismo, aggressiveness, and violent impulses are not easily suppressed, and attitudes toward sex and gender identity are not transformed overnight. Therefore there are many individuals who resist these changes, and the System is faced with the problem of overcoming their resistance.⁵⁶

2. How the System Exploits the Impulse to Rebel

All of us in modern society are hemmed in by a dense network of rules and regulations. We are at the mercy of large organizations such as corporations, governments, labor unions, universities, churches, and political parties, and consequently we are powerless. As a result of the servitude, the powerlessness, and the other indignities that the System inflicts on us, there is widespread frustration, which leads to an impulse to rebel. And this is where the System plays its neatest trick: Through a brilliant sleight of hand, it turns rebellion to its own advantage.

Many people do not understand the roots of their own frustration, hence their rebellion is directionless. They know that they want to rebel, but they don't know what they want to rebel against. Luckily, the System is able to fill their need by providing them with a list of standard and stereotyped grievances in the name of which to rebel: racism, homophobia, women's issues, poverty, sweatshops...the whole laundry-bag of "activist" issues.

Huge numbers of would-be rebels take the bait. In fighting racism, sexism, etc., etc., they are only doing the System's work for it. In spite of this, they imagine that they are rebelling against the System. How is this possible?

First, 50 years ago the System was not yet committed to equality for black people, women and homosexuals, so that action in favor of these causes really was a form of rebellion. Consequently these causes came to be conventionally regarded as rebel causes. They have retained that status today simply as a matter of tradition; that is, because each rebel generation imitates the preceding generations.

Second, there are still significant numbers of people, as I pointed out earlier, who resist the social changes that the System requires, and some of these people even are authority figures such

Anyone who wanted to take the trouble could multiply these examples a thousand times over. The evidence that the System itself is set on eliminating discrimination and victimization is so obvious and so massive that one boggles at the radicals' belief that fighting these evils is a form of rebellion. One can only attribute it to a phenomenon well known to professional propagandists: People tend to block out, to fail to perceive or to remember, information that conflicts with their ideology. See the interesting article, "Propaganda," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 26, Macropaedia, 15th Edition, 1997, pages 171-79, specifically page 176.

⁵⁶ In this section I've said something about what the System is not, but I haven't said what the System is. A friend of mine has pointed out that this may leave the reader nonplussed, so I'd better explain that for the purposes of this article it isn't necessary to have a precise definition of what the System is. I couldn't think of any way of defining the System in a single, well-rounded sentence and I didn't want to break the continuity of the article with a long, awkward, and unnecessary digression addressing the question of what the System is, so I left that question unanswered. I don't think my failure to answer it will seriously impair the reader's understanding of the point that I want to make in this article.

as cops, judges, or politicians. These resisters provide a target for the would-be rebels, someone for them to rebel against. Commentators like Rush Limbaugh help the process by ranting against the activists: Seeing that they have made someone angry fosters the activists' illusion that they are rebelling.

Third, in order to bring themselves into conflict even with that majority of the System's leaders who fully accept the social changes that the System demands, the would-be rebels insist on solutions that go farther than what the System's leaders consider prudent, and they show exaggerated anger over trivial matters. For example, they demand payment of reparations to black people, and they often become enraged at any criticism of a minority group, no matter how cautious and reasonable.

In this way the activists are able to maintain the illusion that they are rebelling against the System. But the illusion is absurd. Agitation against racism, sexism, homophobia and the like no more constitutes rebellion against the System than does agitation against political graft and corruption. Those who work against graft and corruption are not rebelling but acting as the System's enforcers: They are helping to keep the politicians obedient to the rules of the System. Those who work against racism, sexism, and homophobia similarly are acting as the Systems' enforcers: They help the System to suppress the deviant racist, sexist, and homophobic attitudes that cause problems for the System.

But the activists don't act only as the System's enforcers. They also serve as a kind of lightning rod that protects the System by drawing public resentment away from the System and its institutions. For example, there were several reasons why it was to the System's advantage to get women out of the home and into the workplace. Fifty years ago, if the System, as represented by the government or the media, had begun out of the blue a propaganda campaign designed to make it socially acceptable for women to center their lives on careers rather than on the home, the natural human resistance to change would have caused widespread public resentment. What actually happened was that the changes were spearheaded by radical feminists, behind whom the System's institutions trailed at a safe distance. The resentment of the more conservative members of society was directed primarily against the radical feminists rather than against the System and its institutions, because the changes sponsored by the System seemed slow and moderate in comparison with the more radical solutions advocated by feminists, and even these relatively slow changes were seen as having been forced on the System by pressure from the radicals.

3. The System's Neatest Trick

So, in a nutshell, the System's neatest trick is this:

1. For the sake of its own efficiency and security, the System needs to bring about deep and radical social changes to match the changed conditions resulting from technological progress.
2. The frustration of life under the circumstances imposed by the System leads to rebellious impulses.
3. Rebellious impulses are co-opted by the System in the service of the social changes it requires; activists "rebel" against the old and outmoded values that are no longer of use to the System and in favor of the new values that the System needs us to accept.

4. In this way rebellious impulses, which otherwise might have been dangerous to the System, are given an outlet that is not only harmless to the System, but useful to it.
5. Much of the public resentment resulting from the imposition of social changes is drawn away from the System and its institutions and is directed instead at the radicals who spearhead the social changes.

Of course, this trick was not planned in advance by the System's leaders, who are not conscious of having played a trick at all. The way it works is something like this:

In deciding what position to take on any issue, the editors, publishers, and owners of the media must consciously or unconsciously balance several factors. They must consider how their readers or viewers will react to what they print or broadcast about the issue, they must consider how their advertisers, their peers in the media, and other powerful persons will react, and they must consider the effect on the security of the System of what they print or broadcast.

These practical considerations will usually outweigh whatever personal feelings they may have about the issue. The personal feelings of the media leaders, their advertisers, and other powerful persons are varied. They may be liberal or conservative, religious or atheistic. The only universal common ground among the leaders is their commitment to the System, its security, and its power. Therefore, within the limits imposed by what the public is willing to accept, the principal factor determining the attitudes propagated by the media is a rough consensus of opinion among the media leaders and other powerful people as to what is good for the System.

Thus, when an editor or other media leader sets out to decide what attitude to take toward a movement or a cause, his first thought is whether the movement includes anything that is good or bad for the System. Maybe he tells himself that his decision is based on moral, philosophical, or religious grounds, but it is an observable fact that in practice the security of the System takes precedence over all other factors in determining the attitude of the media.

For example, if a news-magazine editor looks at the militia movement, he may or may not sympathize personally with some of its grievances and goals, but he also sees that there will be a strong consensus among his advertisers and his peers in the media that the militia movement is potentially dangerous to the System and therefore should be discouraged. Under these circumstances he knows that his magazine had better take a negative attitude toward the militia movement. The negative attitude of the media presumably is part of the reason why the militia movement has died down.

When the same editor looks at radical feminism he sees that some of its more extreme solutions would be dangerous to the System, but he also sees that feminism holds much that is useful to the System. Women's participation in the business and technical world integrates them and their families better into the System. Their talents are of service to the System in business and technical matters. Feminist emphasis on ending domestic abuse and rape also serves the System's needs, since rape and abuse, like other forms of violence, are dangerous to the System. Perhaps most important, the editor recognizes that the pettiness and meaninglessness of modern housework and the social isolation of the modern housewife can lead to serious frustration for many women; frustration that will cause problems for the System unless women are allowed an outlet through careers in the business and technical world.

Even if this editor is a macho type who personally feels more comfortable with women in a subordinate position, he knows that feminism, at least in a relatively moderate form, is good

for the System. He knows that his editorial posture must be favorable toward moderate feminism, otherwise he will face the disapproval of his advertisers and other powerful people. This is why the mainstream media's attitude has been generally supportive of moderate feminism, mixed toward radical feminism, and consistently hostile only toward the most extreme feminist positions.

Through this type of process, rebel movements that are dangerous to the System are subjected to negative propaganda, while rebel movements that are believed to be useful to the System are given cautious encouragement in the media. Unconscious absorption of media propaganda influences would-be rebels to "rebel" in ways that serve the interests of the System.

The university intellectuals also play an important role in carrying out the System's trick. Though they like to fancy themselves independent thinkers, the intellectuals are (allowing for individual exceptions) the most oversocialized, the most conformist, the tamest and most domesticated, the most pampered, dependent, and spineless group in America today. As a result, their impulse to rebel is particularly strong. But, because they are incapable of independent thought, real rebellion is impossible for them. Consequently they are suckers for the System's trick, which allows them to irritate people and enjoy the illusion of rebelling without ever having to challenge the System's basic values.

Because they are the teachers of young people, the university intellectuals are in a position to help the System play its trick on the young, which they do by steering young people's rebellious impulses toward the standard, stereotyped targets: racism, colonialism, women's issues, etc. Young people who are not college students learn through the media, or through personal contact, of the "social justice" issues for which students rebel, and they imitate the students. Thus a youth culture develops in which there is a stereotyped mode of rebellion that spreads through imitation of peers—just as hairstyles, clothing styles, and other fads spread through imitation.

4. The Trick Is Not Perfect

Naturally, the System's trick does not work perfectly. Not all of the positions adopted by the "activist" community are consistent with the needs of the System. In this connection, some of the most important difficulties that confront the System are related to the conflict between the two different types of propaganda that the System has to use, integration propaganda and agitation propaganda.⁵⁷

Integration propaganda is the principal mechanism of socialization in modern society. It is propaganda that is designed to instill in people the attitudes, beliefs, values, and habits that they need to have in order to be safe and useful tools of the System. It teaches people to permanently repress or sublimate those emotional impulses that are dangerous to the System. Its focus is on long-term attitudes and deep-seated values of broad applicability, rather than on attitudes toward specific, current issues.

Agitation propaganda plays on people's emotions so as to bring out certain attitudes or behaviors in specific, current situations. Instead of teaching people to suppress dangerous emotional impulses, it seeks to stimulate certain emotions for well-defined purposes localized in time.

⁵⁷ The concepts of "integration propaganda" and "agitation propaganda" are discussed by Jacques Ellul in his book *Propaganda*, published by Alfred A. Knopf, 1965.

The System needs an orderly, docile, cooperative, passive, dependent population. Above all it requires a nonviolent population, since it needs the government to have a monopoly on the use of physical force. For this reason, integration propaganda has to teach us to be horrified, frightened, and appalled by violence, so that we will not be tempted to use it even when we are very angry. (By "violence" I mean physical attacks on human beings.) More generally, integration propaganda has to teach us soft, cuddly values that emphasize nonaggressiveness, interdependence, and cooperation.

On the other hand, in certain contexts the System itself finds it useful or necessary to resort to brutal, aggressive methods to achieve its own objectives. The most obvious example of such methods is warfare. In wartime the System relies on agitation propaganda: In order to win public approval of military action, it plays on people's emotions to make them feel frightened and angry at their real or supposed enemy.

In this situation there is a conflict between integration propaganda and agitation propaganda. Those people in whom the cuddly values and the aversion to violence have been most deeply planted can't easily be persuaded to approve a bloody military operation.

Here the System's trick backfires to some extent. The activists, who have been "rebelling" all along in favor of the values of integration propaganda, continue to do so during wartime. They oppose the war effort not only because it is violent but because it is "racist," "colonialist," "imperialist," etc., all of which are contrary to the soft, cuddly values taught by integration propaganda.

The System's trick also backfires where the treatment of animals is concerned. Inevitably, many people extend to animals the soft values and the aversion to violence that they are taught with respect to humans. They are horrified by the slaughter of animals for meat and by other practices harmful to animals, such as the reduction of chickens to egg-laying machines kept in tiny cages or the use of animals in scientific experiments. Up to a point, the resulting opposition to mistreatment of animals may be useful to the System: Because a vegan diet is more efficient in terms of resource-utilization than a carnivorous one is, veganism, if widely adopted, will help to ease the burden placed on the Earth's limited resources by the growth of the human population. But activists' insistence on ending the use of animals in scientific experiments is squarely in conflict with the System's needs, since for the foreseeable future there is not likely to be any workable substitute for living animals as research subjects.

All the same, the fact that the System's trick does backfire here and there does not prevent it from being on the whole a remarkably effective device for turning rebellious impulses to the System's advantage.

It has to be conceded that the trick described here is not the only factor determining the direction that rebellious impulses take in our society. Many people today feel weak and powerless (for the very good reason that the System really does make us weak and powerless), and therefore identify obsessively with victims, with the weak and the oppressed. That's part of the reason why victimization issues, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and neocolonialism have become standard activist issues.

5. An Example

I have with me an anthropology textbook⁵⁸ in which I've noticed several nice examples of the way in which university intellectuals help the System with its trick by disguising conformity as criticism of modern society. The cutest of these examples is found on pages 132–36, where the author quotes, in "adapted" form, an article by one Rhonda Kay Williamson, an intersexed person (that is, a person born with both male and female physical characteristics).

Williamson states that the American Indians not only accepted intersexed persons but especially valued them.⁵⁹ She contrasts this attitude with the Euro-American attitude, which she equates with the attitude that her own parents adopted toward her.

Williamson's parents mistreated her cruelly. They held her in contempt for her intersexed condition. They told her she was "cursed and given over to the devil," and they took her to charismatic churches to have the "demon" cast out of her. She was even given napkins into which she was supposed to "cough out the demon."

But it is obviously ridiculous to equate this with the modern Euro-American attitude. It may approximate the Euro-American attitude of 150 years ago, but nowadays almost any American educator psychologist, or mainstream clergyman would be horrified at that kind of treatment of an intersexed person. The media would never dream of portraying such treatment in a favorable light. Average middle-class Americans today may not be as accepting of the intersexed condition as the Indians were, but few would fail to recognize the cruelty of the way in which Williamson was treated.

Williamson's parents obviously were deviants, religious kooks whose attitudes and beliefs were way out of line with the values of the System. Thus, while putting on a show of criticizing modern Euro-American society, Williamson really is attacking only deviant minorities and cultural laggards who have not yet adapted to the dominant values of present-day America.

Haviland, the author of the book, on page 12 portrays cultural anthropology as iconoclastic, as challenging the assumptions of modern Western society. This is so far contrary to the truth that it would be funny if it weren't so pathetic. The mainstream of modern American anthropology is abjectly subservient to the values and assumptions of the System. When today's anthropologists pretend to challenge the values of their society, typically they challenge only the values of the past—obsolete and outmoded values now held by no one but deviants and laggards who have not kept up with the cultural changes that the System requires of us.

Haviland's use of Williamson's article illustrates this very well, and it represents the general slant of Haviland's book. Haviland plays up ethnographic facts that teach his readers politically correct lessons, but he understates or omits altogether ethnographic facts that are politically incorrect. Thus, while he quotes Williamson's account to emphasize the Indians' acceptance of intersexed persons, he does not mention, for example, that among many of the Indian tribes women who committed adultery had their noses cut off,⁶⁰ whereas no such punishment was

⁵⁸ William A. Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology*, Ninth Edition, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1999.

⁵⁹ I assume that this statement is accurate. It certainly reflects the Navaho attitude. See Gladys A. Reichard, *Navaho Religion: A Study of Symbolism*, Princeton University Press, 1990, page 141. This book was originally copyrighted in 1950, well before American anthropology became heavily politicized, so I see no reason to suppose that its information is slanted.

⁶⁰ This is well known. See, e.g., Angie Debo, *Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1976, page 225; Thomas B. Marquis (interpreter), *Wooden Leg: A Warrior Who Fought Custer*, Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1967, page 97; Stanley Vestal, *Sitting Bull, Champion of the Sioux: A Biography*, University

inflicted on male adulterers; or that among the Crow Indians a warrior who was struck by a stranger had to kill the offender immediately, else he was irretrievably disgraced in the eyes of his tribe;⁶¹ nor does Haviland discuss the habitual use of torture by the Indians of the eastern United States.⁶² Of course, facts of that kind represent violence, machismo, and gender-discrimination, hence they are inconsistent with the present-day values of the System and tend to get censored out as politically incorrect.

Yet I don't doubt that Haviland is perfectly sincere in his belief that anthropologists challenge the assumptions of Western society. The capacity for self-deception of our university intellectuals will easily stretch that far.

To conclude, I want to make clear that I'm not suggesting that it is good to cut off noses for adultery, or that any other abuse of women should be tolerated, nor would I want to see anybody scorned or rejected because they are intersexed or because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, etc., etc., etc. But in our society today these matters are, at most, issues of reform. The System's neatest trick consists in having turned powerful rebellious impulses, which otherwise might have taken a revolutionary direction, to the service of these modest reforms.

Technological Slavery — Kaczynski, Theodore J.

of Oklahoma Press, 1989, page 6; *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 13, Macropaedia, 15th Edition, 1997, article "American Peoples, Native," page 380.

⁶¹ Osborne Russell, *Journal of a Trapper*, Bison Books edition, page 147.

⁶² Use of torture by the Indians of the eastern U.S. is well known. See, e.g., Clark Wissler, *Indians of the United States*, Revised Edition, Anchor Books, Random House, New York, 1989, pages 131, 140, 145, 165, 282; Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, Anchor Books, Random House, New York, 1988, page 135; *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 13, Macropaedia, 15th Edition, 1997, article "American Peoples, Native," page 385; James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America*, Oxford University Press, 1985, page citation not available.

An Interview with Ted Kaczynski

by Blackfoot Valley Dispatch

Ted Kaczynski

2001

In 1999 I requested an interview with Theodore J. Kaczynski for the Blackfoot Valley Dispatch which he kindly granted. The interview took place that same year at the United States Penitentiary, Administrative Maximum, Florence, Colorado.

BVD: Well...

TJK: Well.

BVD: Well, why did you leave your job at Berkeley and your career in mathematics?

TJK: At the time I accepted the job at Berkeley, I had already decided that I would keep it for at most two years before leaving it to go live in the woods. The fact is that I never at any time felt satisfied with the idea of spending my life as just a mathematician and nothing more. Ever since my early teens I had dreamed of escaping from civilization—as in going to live on an uninhabited island or in some other wild place.

The trouble was that I didn't know how to go about it, and it was extremely difficult to work up the nerve to cut loose from my civilized moorings and take off to the woods. It's very difficult because sometimes we don't know how much the choices we make are governed by the expectations of people around us, and the fact that we go and do something other people would regard as mad—it's very difficult to do. Furthermore, I didn't know where to go really.

But at about the beginning of my last year at the University of Michigan I went through a kind of crisis. You could say that the psychological chains with which society binds us sort of broke for me. After that I was sure that I had the courage to break away from the system, to take off and just go into some wild place and try to live there. When I went to Berkeley, I never went there with the intention of continuing there indefinitely. I took the job at Berkeley only to earn some money to get started with, to buy a piece of land.

BVD: You said that when you were in your early teens you had dreams of going to live in an uninhabited place. Do you recall anything that led you to have those dreams? Something you saw or experienced?

TJK: Certainly things I read led me in that direction. Robinson Crusoe, for one thing. And then when I was maybe 11 or 12, somewhere in around there, I read some anthropology books about Neanderthal man and speculations about the way they lived and so forth. I became very interested in reading about that stuff and at some point asked myself why I wanted to read more

about this material. At some point it dawned on me that what I really wanted was not to read more about these things but to actually live that way.

BVD: It's interesting that these things impacted you so strongly that you actually acted on them. What do you think it was about the lives or lifestyles of Crusoe and Neanderthal man that appealed to you?

TJK: At the time I don't think I knew why I was attracted to those ways of life. I now think it had a great deal to do with freedom and personal autonomy.

BVD: Those things must appeal to many people. So, why not everyone who...?

TJK: I think a lot of people are attracted to these things, but they aren't especially determined to actually break away from their ties and actually go and do something like that. Robinson Crusoe is supposed to be one of the most widely read books that's ever been written. So it's obviously attractive to many people. [An investigator for my case] said that she herself was very interested in the way of life I adopted in Montana and that many other people to whom she talked about my case were also very interested in it.

And many people that her investigators talked to thought that they envied me. As a matter of fact, one of the FBI agents who arrested me said "I really envy your way of life up here." So, there are a lot of people who react that way, but they just sort of drift with the tide and don't come to a point where they break away.

BVD: When you broke away, you went to Lincoln, Montana. Why Lincoln?

TJK: Well, first of all I applied for a lease on a piece of crown land in British Columbia. After, I think, over a year, they turned it down. I spent the next winter, the winter of 1970-1971, at my parents' home in Lombard, Illinois. Meanwhile my brother had gone to live in Great Falls, Montana, where he eventually got a job at the Anaconda Company smelter. At some point during that winter he mentioned in a letter to my mother that if I wanted to buy a piece of land in his part of the country, he would be interested in going 50-50 with me on it. So during the spring I drove out to Great Falls, showed up at his apartment, and took him up on his offer. With characteristic passivity, he left it up to me to find a piece of land.

Not knowing what else to do, I just took off toward the west on Highway 200, which at the time I think was called Highway 20, to see what I could see. As I passed through Lincoln I saw a little cabin, almost just a kiosk by the side of the road, with a sign advertising real estate. I stopped and asked the realtor, an old man named Ray Jensen, whether he could show me a secluded plot of land. He showed me a place up Stemple Pass Road. I liked it. I took my brother to see it and he liked it too, so we bought it. We paid \$2,100 in cash—in twenty dollar bills—to the owner, Cliff Gehring, Senior.

BVD: So it could have been almost anywhere, actually.

TJK: Yeah.

BVD: What was Lincoln like when you first moved there?

TJK: The town itself to me doesn't seem that much different. I don't notice that much change. But there has been some, like the new school, the library, and a few new businesses. Maybe I would notice the changes in the town more if I were interested in it, but since I'm not, I don't notice much of those changes.

I am interested in the surrounding countryside, and that has changed a lot because aside from logging and road building, an awful lot of people have moved in there. For example, Stemple Pass Road. There were far fewer places along Stemple Pass Road, and most of them were just log cabins. Not modern log cabins, but ones that must have been built decades and decades ago, and

the few year-round residents were real old-timers, another culture, not modern people. Stemple Pass Road at that time looked like a bit left over from the old frontier days.

If you go down Stemple Pass Road today, you'll see these fancy, pretentious, modern things that really look out of place in the woods. But the very few cabins that existed before were not pretentious. They weren't modern. In fact, once when my parents came to visit me in the early 1970s, we drove along Stemple Pass Road and my mother, who is bourgeois to the core in spite of her background, asked in a sneering tone "Who are these people who live in these places? Are they just drifters or what?" They weren't drifters, but stable old-timers, retirees. But they weren't concerned about status and the appearance of their homes. They were old-fashioned enough so that they didn't care whether their houses had an appearance of middle-class respectability. So, by my mother's standard their homes looked shabby.

You can see how Stemple Pass Road has changed and similar changes, I think, characterize a lot of the country around Lincoln, because a lot of places where there are cabins now, there were no cabins when I got there.

BVD: Your cabin looked right at home—harmonious—with its surroundings in the woods. Did you use plans to help you with the building of it or did you plan the building yourself?

TJK: I just planned it myself.

BVD: And you built the cabin yourself?

TJK: I had a little help from my brother, but very little. The amount of help he gave me was insignificant. Mostly I did it by myself.

BVD: How long did it take you to build it?

TJK: It took me from the beginning of July 1971 until I think late November. But the work was interrupted by some trips I made to Great Falls for various purposes. Much more important, it was interrupted when I scalded my foot. On August 1st, 1971, I was so clumsy as to knock over a pot of boiling soup. It poured right down into my sneaker and scalded my foot so badly that, on doctor's orders, I remained inactive for about 5 or 5 1/2 weeks.

BVD: I'm curious. Did you have enough light in your cabin? Was it light enough in there?

TJK: In the winter?

BVD: Anytime.

TJK: Yeah. It was light enough. Except for when it got dark outside, of course.

BVD: Who were the people you first met when you came to Lincoln, and who were your neighbors?

TJK: Well, obviously, the realtor. But, the first people whom I knew socially when I moved onto my property were Glen and Dolores Williams, who still own the cabin next to mine. They never lived there permanently. It was only a vacation home for them. I was always on friendly terms with them, but I never became at all close to them. And, Irene Preston and Kenny Lee. They were, what we call, colorful characters. He used to have some interesting stories...

BVD: And when did you meet the Lundbergs?

TJK: I think I first met Dick Lundberg around 1975, because until that time I had a car, later an old pickup truck. But after about 1975 I had no functioning motor vehicle, and that was when I started riding to Helena occasionally with Dick. I think I met Ellen in the late 1970s or early '80s.

BVD: So, these people you met were the people living in close proximity to you.

TJK: Yeah. Glen and his wife, as you know, were living just below me, and I also met Bill Hull and some members of his family. Aside from clerks in stores and so forth, those were the only people I got to know until, oh, probably into the '80s. When Sherri (Wood) took over the library,

I started to get to know her. Eventually I got to know Theresa and the Garlands. I got to know them by going into their store. So, I didn't really get to know people there to any significant extent for the first 10 years I was there, or more.

BVD: What about Chris Waits?

TJK: The first I met him would probably be somewhere around the mid '80s. I don't remember. He used to sometimes pass me on the road. I may have taken a ride from him once or twice—I'm not sure if I ever did at all. But I know he used to pass me on the road and say hello, and that's the only acquaintance I ever had with him, except once I was at his yard sale at Leora Hall's, and I talked briefly to him there. See, I pretty much spent my time in the woods and kept to myself, and so, really, had no occasion to meet anyone except the people living in the immediate area.

BVD: I see. He didn't really live in the immediate area. About Leora Hall's yard sale, where you briefly talked to him: in his book, Waits claims that you bought silver or silver-plated flatware there. But Leora Hall has said that you positively did not buy any silver or silver-plated flatware, because she didn't have any for sale. She does, however, remember seeing you there and even remembers the specific items bought. Any comment?

TJK: I've never bought any silver-plated flatware from Leora Hall or anyone else.

BVD: Well, let's move on then. Did you follow routines in your life?

TJK: I didn't really have routines, but certain activities—such as cooking meals or fetching sticks for kindling—tended to fall into routine patterns.

BVD: What was an average day like for you in Lincoln?

TJK: That's a very difficult question to answer because I don't know that there was an average day. My activities varied so much according to the season and according to the tasks I had before me on a given day. But I will describe a representative day...

TJK: ...Well, let's take a day in January, and let's suppose I wake up about 3:00 a.m. to find that snow is falling. I start a fire in my stove and put a pot of water on. When the water comes to a boil I dump a certain quantity of rolled oats into it and stir them for a few minutes until they are cooked. Then I take the pot off the stove, add a couple of spoonfuls of sugar and some milk—made from powdered milk. While the oats are cooling I eat a piece of cold boiled rabbit meat. Afterward I eat the oats. I sit for a few minutes before the open door of the stove watching the fire burn down, then I take my clothes off again, get back into bed, and go to sleep. When I wake up, the sky is just starting to get light. I get out of bed and dress myself quickly because it's cold in the cabin. By the time I'm dressed there's a little more light and I can see that it's no longer snowing and the sky is clear. Because of the fresh snow it should be a good day for rabbit hunting. So I take my old, beat-up, single-shot 22 down from the hooks on the wall. I put my little wooden cartridge-box, containing 16 cartridges, in my pocket, with a couple of books of matches wrapped in plastic bags and a sheath knife on my belt in case I have to build a fire in an emergency. Then I put on my snowshoes and take off. First there's a hard climb to get up on top of the ridge, and then a level walk of a mile or so to get to the open forest of lodgepole pines where I want to hunt. A little way into the pines I find the tracks of a snowshoe hare. I follow the trail around and around through its tangled meanderings for about an hour. Then suddenly I see the black eye and the black-tipped ears of an otherwise white snowshoe hare. It's usually the eye and the black-tipped ears you notice first. The bunny is watching me from behind the tangled branches and green needles of a recently-fallen pine tree. The rabbit is about 40 feet away, but it's alert and watching me, so I won't try to get closer. However, I have to maneuver for an angle to shoot from, so that I can have a clear shot through the tangle of branches—even a slender

twig can deflect a .22 bullet enough to cause a miss. To get that clear shot I have to lie down in the snow in an odd position and use my knee as a rest for the rifle barrel. I line up the sights on the rabbit's head, at a point just behind the eye...hold steady...ping! The rabbit is clipped through the head. Such a shot ordinarily kills the rabbit instantly, but the animal's hind legs usually kick violently for a few seconds so that it bounces around in the snow. When the rabbit stops kicking I walk up to it and see that it's quite dead. I say aloud "Thank you, Grandfather Rabbit"—Grandfather Rabbit is a kind of demigod I've invented who is the tutelary spirit of all the snowshoe rabbits. I stand for a few minutes looking around at the pure-white snow and the sunlight filtering through the pine trees. I take in the silence and the solitude. It's good to be here. Occasionally I've found snowmobile tracks along the crest of the main ridge, but in these woods where I am now, once the big-game hunting season is over, in all my years in this country I've never seen a human footprint other than my own. I take one of the noosed cords out of my pocket. For convenience in carrying I put the noose around the rabbit's neck and wrap the other end of the cord around my mittened hand. Then I go looking for the trail of another rabbit. When I have three rabbits I head home. On arriving there I've been out some six or seven hours. My first task is to peel off the skins of the rabbits and remove their guts. Their livers, hearts, kidneys, brains, and some assorted scraps I put in a tin can. I hang the carcasses up under the shelter, then run down to my root cellar to fetch some potatoes and a couple of parsnips. When these have been washed and other chores performed—splitting some wood maybe, or collecting snow to melt for drinking water—I put the pot on the boil, and at the appropriate time add some dried wild greens, the parsnips, the potatoes, and the livers and other internal organs of the rabbits. By the time it's all cooked, the sky is getting dark. I eat my stew by the light of my kerosene lamp. Or, if I want to economize, maybe I open the door of the stove and eat by the light of the fire. I finish off with a half a handful of raisins. I'm tired but at peace. I sit for a while in front of the open door of the stove gazing at the fire. I may read a little. More likely I'll just lie on my bed for a time watching the firelight flicker on the walls. When I get sleepy I take off my clothes, get under the blankets, and go to sleep.

BVD: I envy you, too ... While work, that does sound wonderful. Freedom and autonomy. No time clock to punch, whether literal or figurative. But let me shift topic. You just mentioned sleep. Was your bed, or bunk, comfortable?

TJK: Well, it was comfortable enough for me.

BVD: I respect and appreciate your thanking Grandfather Rabbit. I'm reminded of the real origins of the ritual or custom of saying grace before a meal: A solemn awareness of sacrifice, that all life gives itself so that other life may live...Do you believe in fate?

TJK: No.

BVD: Do you believe in God?

TJK: No. Do you?

BVD: Fate or God?

TJK: Both.

BVD: Maybe... I remember reading that your parents were atheists, that you were raised in an atheistic home.

TJK: True.

BVD: Do you remember your parents ever talking about God? Did they ever say anything like "This is what some people believe..."?

TJK: Oh, they did a little bit. For example, if my mother were reading a book to me and something about God were in there, she would explain “Well, some people believe so-and-so, but we don’t believe it.” That sort of thing.

BVD: I see... Well, back on your representative day—you mentioned some of what you might eat. What was our diet like in general? What would you eat on a typical day?

TJK: This varied so much with the season.... Between 1975 and 1983 I would buy flour, rice, rolled oats, sugar, cornmeal, cooking oil, and powdered milk, and a modest amount of canned fruit and/or tomatoes for the winter. I would eat maybe one can every other day through the cold season. I would eat a small amount of canned fish and dried fruit. Other than that almost everything I ate was wild or grown in my garden. I ate deer, elk, snowshoe hare, pine squirrel, three kinds of grouse, and porcupines, and occasionally ducks, rockchucks, muskrats, packrats, weasels, coyotes, an owl killed by accident—I would never kill an owl intentionally—deer mice, and grasshoppers, huckleberries, soapberries, red twinberries, black twinberries, gooseberries, two kinds of black currants, raspberries, strawberries, Oregon grapes, choke cherries, and rose hips. Starchy roots I ate were camas, yampa, bitterroot and Lomatium, also sprint beauty... I also ate a few minor kinds of roots and a couple of dozen kinds of wild greens. During May and June, before each meal I would eat a salad, often quite a large salad, by just strolling around my property, picking a bit of this and that, and popping it into my mouth. In a few cases I ground up edible seeds and used them for bread. But grinding them was excessively time consuming. I had no hand-mill, and ground them on a rock. In my garden I grew potatoes, parsnips, beets, onions, two kinds of carrots, spinach, radishes, broccoli, and on occasion orach, Jerusalem artichoke, and turnips.

I would dry wild greens and garden vegetables, and sometimes berries, for use in the winter. But for my starchy foods I relied mainly on potatoes and on store-bought staples such as flour, rice, et cetera. Wild starchy roots are scanty up in the high country. Bitterroot and camas are abundant in places in the lower, flat areas, but these are mostly private land and presumably the ranchers wouldn’t want me digging up their meadows to get these foods. In the winters I used to use a tea made from the needles of Douglas fir as a source of vitamin C.

My last winter in Montana, 1995-1996, I was hard up. But when you have to dispense with the things that the system provides, it’s surprising how well you can do by improvising on your own. I had no commercial fruits or vegetables, whether fresh, dried, or canned, but I had plenty of my own dried vegetables. I had some dried black currants and rhubarb, and I had squirrels and rabbits for meat. The commercial stuff I had was just flour—whole wheat and white—cooking oil, sugar, and I think I had a scanty supply of rice. I don’t recall whether I had any oats or cornmeal. I do know that the little powdered milk that I had soon run out and I was using plaster of Paris—dental—as a source of calcium. When that ran out I was planning to use either burnt, pulverized rabbit bones, or pulverized limestone. But I did alright, I enjoyed my meals, and it was a good winter.

BVD: What was your favorite wild food?

TJK: Probably the tastiest wild food in the Lincoln area is partridge berries, a tiny species of *Vaccinium*—the blueberry genus—that grows at high altitudes. The berries are so tiny that it may take an hour to pick a cupful, but the flavor is superb. Apart from those, my favorite foods are huckleberries, yampa, and the livers of deer, snowshoe rabbit, and porcupines.

BVD: Did you have any favorite meals that you prepared?

TJK: I didn't have any standard meals, since I just ate what was available at a given time. Generally speaking, my best meals were the stews that contained meat, vegetables, and some starchy food such as potatoes, rice, noodles, or roots such as yampa.

BVD: Would you eat your meals outdoors?

TJK: I seldom did that. I usually ate indoors, at my table in the cabin... When I was done eating, I would sometimes sit back in my chair with my feet up on the table and just gaze out the window for a while...

BVD: Could you see out the window?

TJK: Pardon me?

BVD: Could you see out the window?

TJK: Yes. That's what windows are for...

BVD: How did you learn which plants were edible, and their preparation, if any was needed?

TJK: For years before I left Berkeley I'd been interested in the outdoors, and I had been learning skills such as how to recognize edible wild plants and so forth. I learned how to recognize them from books on the subject, such as *Edible Wild Plants of Eastern North America*, by Fernald and Kinsey, and *Wild Edible Plants of the Western United States*, by Donald Kirk. The books give some information about preparation of these plants, but mostly I learned to prepare them by trial and error. I learned some edible plants by experiment. It would be dangerous to experiment with certain families of plants, such as the carrot family and the lily family, because they contain some species that are deadly poisonous. But it's safe to experiment with the mustard family; and the composite family and the beet family, as far as I know, contain no deadly species, though they do contain some that are more or less poisonous. There were a couple of members of the mustard family that I used as greens without ever learning the names of the plants. There was a member of the composite family that I ate for years before I learned that it was a species of false dandelion. And there was a member of the beet family that I often ate but never did identify.

BVD: Were you self-sufficient?

TJK: By no means wholly self-sufficient. I needed store-bought staples such as flour, rice, rolled oats, and cooking oil. I bought most of my clothing, though I also made some. Originally, complete self-sufficiency was a goal that I wanted to attain eventually, but with the shrinking of the wild country and the crowding-in of people around me, I got to feeling that there wasn't any point in it anymore, and my interests turned in other directions.

BVD: How did the way you chose to live fulfill your dreams, desires, or original motivations? That is, your dreams as a youth, and your plan and decision to leave Berkeley. And what was the most satisfying thing about your life in Lincoln?

TJK: In my life in the woods I found certain satisfactions that I had expected, such as personal freedom, independence, a certain element of adventure, a low-stress way of life.

I also achieved certain satisfactions that I hadn't fully understood or anticipated, or that even came as complete surprises to me.

The more intimate you become with nature, the more you appreciate its beauty. It's a beauty that consists not only in sights and sounds but in an appreciation of...the whole thing. I don't know how to express it. What is significant is that when you live in the woods, rather than just visiting them, the beauty becomes a part of your life rather than something you just look at from the outside.

Related to this, part of the intimacy with nature that you acquire, is the sharpening of your senses. Not that your hearing or eyesight become more acute, but you notice things more. In city

life you tend to be turned inward, in a way. Your environment is crowded with irrelevant sights and sounds, and you get conditioned to block most of them out of your consciousness. In the woods you get so that your awareness is turned outward, toward your environment, hence you are much more conscious of what goes on around you. For example, you'll notice inconspicuous things on the ground, such as edible plants or animal tracks. If a human being has passed through and has left even just a small part of a footprint, you'll probably notice it. You know what the sounds are that come to your ears: This is a birdcall, that is the buzzing of a horsefly, this is a startled deer running off, this is the thump of a pine cone that has been cut down by a squirrel and has landed on a log. If you hear a sound that you can't identify, it immediately catches your attention, even if it's so faint that it's barely audible. To me this alertness, or openness of one's senses, is one of the greatest luxuries of living close to nature. You can't understand this unless you've experienced it yourself.

Another thing I learned was the importance of having purposeful work to do. I mean really purposeful work—life-and-death stuff. I didn't truly realize what life in the woods was all about until my economic situation was such that I had to hunt, gather plants, and cultivate a garden in order to eat. During part of my time in Lincoln, especially 1975 through 1978, if I didn't have success in hunting, then I didn't get any meat to eat. I didn't get any vegetables unless I gathered or grew them myself. There is nothing more satisfying than the fulfillment and self-confidence that this kind of self-reliance brings. In connection with this, one loses most of one's fear of death.

In living close to nature, one discovers that happiness does not consist in maximizing pleasure. It consists in tranquility. Once you have enjoyed tranquility long enough, you acquire actually an aversion to the thought of any very strong pleasure—excessive pleasure would disrupt your tranquility.

Finally, one learns that boredom is a disease of civilization. It seems to me that what boredom mostly is is that people have to keep themselves entertained or occupied, because if they aren't, then certain anxieties, frustrations, discontents, and so forth, start coming to the surface, and it makes them uncomfortable. Boredom is almost nonexistent once you've become adapted to life in the woods. If you don't have any work that needs to be done, you can sit for hours at a time just doing nothing, just listening to the birds or the wind or the silence, watching the shadows move as the sun travels, or simply looking at familiar objects. And you don't get bored. You're just at peace.

BVD: What was the hardest part or thing about your life in Lincoln?

TJK: The worst thing about my life in the woods was the inexorable closing-in of modern civilization. There were always more houses along Stemple Pass Road and elsewhere. More roads put through the woods, more areas logged off, more aircraft flying over. Radio collars on the elk, spraying herbicides, et cetera, et cetera.

BVD: What are some of your fondest memories of your life in the woods?

TJK:...Early in the springtime, when the winter's snow was melted off enough to make it possible, I would take long rambles over the hills, enjoying the new physical freedom made possible by the fact that I no longer had to wear snowshoes, and coming home with a load of fresh, young wild vegetables such as wild onions, dandelions, bitterroot, and Lomatium, with a grouse or two—killed illegally, I'll admit. Working on my garden early in the morning. Hunting snowshoe rabbits in the winter. Times spent at my hidden shack during the winter. Certain places where I camped out during spring, summer, or autumn. Autumn stews of deer meat with potatoes and

other vegetables from my garden. Any number of occasions when I just sat or lay still doing nothing, not even thinking much, just soaking in the peace.

BVD: Thank you, very much...

TJK: You're welcome.

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/an-interview-with-ted-kaczynski/>

Letter to a Turkish anarchist

Ted Kaczynski

Introduction

Ted Kaczynski wrote this letter in reply to a Turkish anarchist, Kara, who sent him a series of questions as an interview for her zine. Rather than include Kara's letter, I have quoted only the questions which Kaczynski answered. Spelling and typographical errors, apparently introduced in transcription, have been fixed. Kara's English has been corrected. Section headings have been added.

In the letter, Kaczynski describes his personal motivation for absconding from civilization; he quotes from his journal to explain his motive for seeking its destruction; he asserts the responsibility of technology for civilization; he addresses the idea of non-violence as a value in itself; he rebuts the romanticized vision of primitive society promoted by some primitivists; and he warns against the counter-revolutionary potential of the "Green Anarchist Movement," which he attributes to the influence of leftist values.

Regarding his bombings, Kaczynski claims here that he sought to destroy industrial society only after the land on which he had escaped it was destroyed by development.

The letter follows.

Dear Kara,

I am sorry I have taken so long to answer your letter dated August 12. I am usually busy, especially with answering correspondence, and your letter is one that could not be answered hastily, because some of your questions require long, complicated, carefully-considered answers.

For this same reason, it would cost me an unreasonable amount of time to answer all of your questions. So I will answer only some of them — the ones that seem to me to be most important and those that can be answered easily and briefly.

Biographical

Kara: Where/when were you born?

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., on May 22, 1942.

Kara: Which schools did you graduate from?

I graduated from an elementary school and a high school in Evergreen Park, Illinois. I received a bachelors degree from Harvard University, and masters degree and doctors degree in mathematics from the University of Michigan.

Kara: What was your job?

After receiving my doctors degree from the University of Michigan, I was an assistant professor of mathematics for two years at the University of California.

Kara: Were you married? Do you have children?

I have never been married and have no children.

Rejecting civilization

Kara: You were a mathematician — do you have thoughts like that now? What has changed your ideas wholly? When did you start to think that the problem is in civilisation? Can you tell in a few words why you refused civilisation? How/when did you decide to live in the forest?

A complete answer to these questions would be excessively long and complicated, but I will say the following:

The process through which I came to reject modernity and civilization began when I was eleven years old. At that age I began to be attracted to the primitive way of life as a result of reading of the life of Neanderthal man. In the following years, up to the time when I entered Harvard University at the age of sixteen, I used to dream of escaping from civilization and going to live in some wild place. During the same period, my distaste for modern life grew as I became increasingly aware that people in industrial society were reduced to the status of gears in a machine, that they lacked freedom and were at the mercy of the large organizations that controlled the conditions under which they lived.

After I entered Harvard University I took some courses in anthropology, which taught me more about primitive peoples and gave me an appetite to acquire some of the knowledge that enabled them to live in the wild. For example, I wished to have their knowledge of edible plants. But I had no idea where to get such knowledge until a couple of years later, when I discovered to my surprise that there were books about edible wild plants. The first such a book that I bought was *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, by Euell Gibbons, and after that when I was home from college and graduate school during the summers, I went several times each week to the Cook County Forest Preserves near Chicago to look for edible plants. At first it seemed eerie and strange to go all alone into the forest, away from all roads and paths. But as I came to know the forest and many of the plants and animals that lived in it, the feeling of strangeness disappeared and I grew more and more comfortable in the woodland. I also became more and more certain that I did not want to spend my whole life in civilization, and that I wanted to go and live in some wild place.

Meanwhile, I was doing well in mathematics. It was fun to solve mathematical problems, but in a deeper sense mathematics was boring and empty because for me it had no purpose. If I had worked on applied mathematics I would have contributed to the development of the technological society that I hated, so I worked only on pure mathematics. But pure mathematics was only a game. I did not understand then, and I still do not understand, why mathematicians are content to fritter away their whole lives in a mere game. I myself was completely dissatisfied with such a life. I knew what I wanted: to go and live in some wild place. But I didn't know how to do so. In those days there were no primitivist movements, no survivalists, and anyone who left a promising career in mathematics to go live among forests or mountains would have been regarded as foolish or crazy. I did not know even one person who would have understood why I wanted to do such a thing. So, deep in my heart, I felt convinced that I would never be able to escape from civilization.

Because I found modern life absolutely unacceptable, I grew increasingly hopeless until, at the age of 24, I arrived at a kind of crisis: I felt so miserable that I didn't care whether I lived or died. But when I reached that point, a sudden change took place: I realized that if I didn't care whether I lived or died, then I didn't need to fear the consequences of anything I might do. Therefore I

could do anything I wanted. I was free! That was the great turning-point in my life because it was then that I acquired courage, which has remained with me ever since. It was at that time, too, that I became certain that I would soon go to live in the wild, no matter what the consequences. I spent two years teaching at the University of California in order to save some money, then I resigned my position and went to look for a place to live in the forest.

Motivation for bombing

Kara: How/when did you decide to bomb?

It would take too much time to give a complete answer to the last part of your ninth question, but I will give you a partial answer by quoting what I wrote for my journal on August 14, 1983:

The fifth of August I began a hike to the east. I got to my hidden camp that I have in a gulch beyond what I call "Diagonal Gulch." I stayed there through the following day, August 6. I felt the peace of the forest there. But there are few huckleberries there, and though there are deer, there is very little small game. Furthermore, it had been a long time since I had seen the beautiful and isolated plateau where the various branches of Trout Creek originate. So I decided to take off for that area on the 7th of August. A little after crossing the roads in the neighborhood of Crater Mountain I began to hear chain saws; the sound seemed to be coming from the upper reaches of Roaster Bill Creek. I assumed they were cutting trees; I didn't like it but I thought I would be able to avoid such things when I got onto the plateau. Walking across the hillsides on my way there, I saw down below me a new road that had not been there previously, and that appeared to cross one of the ridges that close in Stemple Creek. This made me feel a little sick. Nevertheless, I went on to the plateau. What I found there broke my heart. The plateau was criss-crossed with new roads, broad and well-made for roads of that kind. The plateau is ruined forever. The only thing that could save it now would be the collapse of the technological society. I couldn't bear it. That was the best and most beautiful and isolated place around here and I have wonderful memories of it.

One road passed within a couple of hundred feet of a lovely spot where I camped for a long time a few years ago and passed many happy hours. Full of grief and rage I went back and camped by South Fork Humbug Creek.

The next day I started for my home cabin. My route took me past a beautiful spot, a favorite place of mine where there was a spring of pure water that could safely be drunk without boiling. I stopped and said a kind of prayer to the spirit of the spring. It was a prayer in which I swore that I would take revenge for what was being done to the forest.

My journal continues: "[...] and then I returned home as quickly as I could because I have something to do!"

You can guess what it was that I had to do.

Technology and civilization

Kara: What made you decide to bomb technological areas? How do you think we can we destroy civilisation? What will make its destruction closer?

Anything like a complete answer to these questions would take too much time. But the following remarks are relevant:

The problem of civilization is identical with the problem of technology. Let me first explain that when I speak of technology I do not refer only to physical apparatus such as tools and machines. I include also techniques, such as the techniques of chemistry, civil engineering, or biotechnology. Included too are human techniques such as those of propaganda or of educational psychology, as well as organizational techniques that could not exist at an advanced level without the physical apparatus — the tools, machines, and structures — on which the whole technological system depends.

However, technology in the broader sense of the word includes not only modern technology but also the techniques and physical apparatuses that existed at earlier stages of society. For example, plows, harnesses for animals, blacksmiths tools, domesticated breed of plants and animals, and the techniques of agriculture, animal husbandry, and metalworking. Early civilizations depended on these technologies, as well as on the human and organizational techniques needed to govern large numbers of people. Civilizations cannot exist without the technology on which they are based. Conversely, where the technology is available civilization is likely to develop sooner or later.

Thus, the problem of civilization can be equated with the problem of technology. The farther back we can push technology, the farther back we will push civilization. If we could push technology all the way back to the stone age, there would be no more civilization.

Violence

Kara: Don't you think violence is violence?

In reference to my alleged actions you ask, "Don't you think violence is violence?" Of course, violence is violence. And violence is also a necessary part of nature. If predators did not kill members of prey species, then the prey species would multiply to the point where they would destroy their environment by consuming everything edible. Many kinds of animals are violent even against members their own species. For example, it is well known that wild chimpanzees often kill other chimpanzees. See, e.g., *Time Magazine*, August 19, 202, page 56. In some regions, fights are common among wild bears. The magazine *Bear and Other Top Predators*, Volume 1, Issue 2, pages 28–29, shows a photograph of bears fighting and a photograph of a bear wounded in a fight, and mentions that such wounds can be deadly. Among the sea birds called brown boobies, two eggs are laid in each nest. After the eggs are hatched, one of the young birds attacks the other and forces it out of the nest, so that it dies. See article "Sibling Desperado," *Science News*, Volume 163, February 15, 2003.

Human beings in the wild constitute one of the more violent species. A good general survey of the cultures of hunting-and-gathering people is *The Hunting Peoples*, by Carleton S. Coon, published by Little, Brown and Company, Boston and Toronto, 1971, and in this book you will

find numerous examples in hunting-and-gathering societies of violence by human beings against other human beings. Professor Coon makes clear (pages XIX, 3, 4, 9, 10) that he admires hunting-and-gathering peoples and regards them as more fortunate than civilized ones. But he is an honest man and does not censor out those aspects of primitive life, such as violence, that appear disagreeable to modern people.

Thus, it is clear that a significant amount of violence is a natural part of human life. There is nothing wrong with violence in itself. In any particular case, whether violence is good or bad depends on how it is used and the purpose for which it is used.

So why do modern people regard violence as evil in itself? They do so for one reason only: they have been brainwashed by propaganda. Modern society uses various forms of propaganda to teach people to be frightened and horrified by violence because the technoindustrial system needs a population that is timid, docile, and afraid to assert itself, a population that will not make trouble or disrupt the orderly functioning of the system. Power depends ultimately on physical force. By teaching people that violence is wrong (except, of course, when the system itself uses violence via the police or the military), the system maintains its monopoly on physical force and thus keeps all power in its own hands.

Whatever philosophical or moral rationalizations people may invent to explain their belief that violence is wrong, the real reason for that belief is that they have unconsciously absorbed the system's propaganda.

Green Anarchism

Kara: How do you see anarchists, green-anarchists, anarcho-primitivists? Do you agree with them? How do you see vegetarianism/veganism? What do you think about refusing to eat and use animals? What do you think about Animal/Earth Liberation? What do you think about groups such as Earth First!, Earth Liberation Front and Gardening Guerillas?

All of the groups you mention here are part of a single movement. (Let's call it the "Green Anarchist" (GA) Movement). Of course, these people are right to the extent that they oppose civilization and the technology on which it is based. But, because of the form in which this movement is developing, it may actually help to protect the technoindustrial system and may serve as an obstacle to revolution. I will explain:

It is difficult to suppress rebellion directly. When rebellion is put down by force, it very often breaks out again later in some new form in which the authorities find it more difficult to control. For example, in 1878 the German Reichstag enacted harsh and repressive laws against Social-Democratic movement, as a result of which the movement was crushed and its members were scattered, confused, and discouraged. But only for a short time. The movement soon reunited itself, became more energetic, and found new ways of spreading its ideas, so that by 1884 it was stronger than ever. G. A. Zimmermann, *Das Neunzehnte Jahrhundert: Geschichtlicher und kulturhistorischer Rückblick*, Druck und Verlag von Geo. Brumder, Milwaukee, 1902, page 23.

Thus, astute observers of human affairs know that the powerful classes of a society can most effectively defend themselves against rebellion by using force and direct repression only to a limited extent, and relying mainly on manipulation to deflect rebellion. One of the most effective devices used is that of providing channels through which rebellious impulses can be expressed in

ways that are harmless to the system. For example, it is well known that in the Soviet Union the satirical magazine *Krokodil* was designed to provide an outlet for complaints and for resentment of the authorities in a way that would lead no one to question the legitimacy of the Soviet system or rebel against it in any serious way.

But the “democratic” system of the West has evolved mechanisms for deflecting rebellion that are far more sophisticated and effective than any that existed in the Soviet Union. It is a truly remarkable fact that in modern Western society people “rebel” in favor of the values of the very system against which they imagine themselves to be rebelling. The left “rebels” in favor of racial and religious equality, equality for women and homosexuals, humane treatment of animals, and so forth. But these are the values that the American mass media teach us over and over again every day. Leftists have been so thoroughly brainwashed by media propaganda that they are able to “rebel” only in terms of these values, which are values of the technoindustrial system itself. In this way the system has successfully deflected the rebellious impulses of the left into channels that are harmless to the system.

Primitive society

The romanticized vision

Rebellion against technology and civilization is real rebellion, a real attack on the values of the existing system. But the green anarchist, anarcho-primitivists, and so forth (the “GA Movement”) have fallen under such heavy influence from the left that their rebellion against civilization has to a great extent been neutralized. Instead of rebelling against the values of civilization, they have adopted many civilized values themselves and have constructed an imaginary picture of primitive societies that embodies these civilized values. They pretend that hunter-gatherers worked only two or three hours a day (which would come to 14 to 21 hours a week), that they had gender equality, that they respected the rights of animals, that they took care not to damage their environment, and so forth. But all that is a myth. If you will read many reports written by people who personally observed hunting-and-gathering societies at a time when these were relatively free of influence from civilization, you will see that:

- All of these societies ate some form of animal food, none were vegan.
- Most (if not all) of these societies were cruel to animals.
- The majority of these societies did not have gender equality.
- The estimate of two or three hours of work a day, or 14 to 21 hours per week, is based on a misleading definition of “work.” A more realistic minimum estimate for fully nomadic hunter-gatherers would probably be about forty hours of work per week, and some worked a great deal more than that.
- Most of these societies were not nonviolent.
- Competition existed in most, or probably all of these societies. In some of them competition could take violent forms.

- These societies varied greatly in the extent to which they took care not to damage their environment. Some may have been excellent conservationists, but others damaged their environment through over-hunting, reckless use of fire, or in other ways.

I could cite numerous reliable sources of information in support of the foregoing statements, but if I did so this letter would become unreasonably long. So I will reserve full documentation for a more suitable occasion. Here I mention only a few examples.

Cruelty to animals

Mbuti pygmies:

The youngster had spread it with his first thrust, pinning the animal to the ground through the fleshy part of the stomach. But the animal was still very much alive, fighting for freedom. [...] Maïpe put another spear into its neck, but it still writhed and fought. Not until a third spear pierced its heart did it give up the struggle. [...] [T]he Pygmies stood around in an excited group, pointing at the dying animal and laughing. At other times I have seen Pygmies singeing the feathers off birds that were still alive, explaining that the meat is more tender if death comes slowly. And the hunting dogs, valuable as they are, get kicked around mercilessly from the day they are born to the day die.

— Colin Turnbull, *The Forest People*, Simon and Schuster, 1962, page 101.

Eskimos: The Eskimos with whom Gontran de Poncins lived kicked and beat their dogs brutally. Gontran de Poncins, *Kabloona*, Time-Life Books, Alexandria, Virginia, 1980, pages 29, 30, 49, 189, 196, 198–99, 212, 216.

Siriono: The Siriono sometimes captured young animals alive and brought them back to camp, but they gave them nothing to eat, and the animals were treated so roughly by the children that they soon died. Allan R. Holmberg, *Nomads of the Long Bow: The Siriono of Eastern Bolivia*, The Natural History Press, Garden City, New York, 1969, pages 69–70, 208. (The Siriono were not pure hunter-gatherers, since they did plant crops to a limited extent at certain times of year, but they lived mostly by hunting and gathering. Holmberg, pages 51, 63, 67, 76–77, 82–83, 265.)

Lack of gender equality

Mbuti pygmies: Turnbull says that among the Mbuti, “A woman is in no way the social inferior of a man” (Colin Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, The Natural History Press, Garden City, New York, 1965, page 270), and that “the woman is not discriminated against” (Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 154). But in the very same books Turnbull states a number of facts that show that the Mbuti did not have gender equality as that term is understood today. “A certain amount of wife-beating is considered good, and the wife is expected to fight back.” *Wayward Servants*, page 287. “He said that he was very content with his wife, and he had not found it necessary to beat her at all often.” *Forest People*, page 205. Man throws his wife to the ground and slaps her.

Wayward Servants, page 211. Husband beats wife. *Wayward Servants*, page 192. Mbuti practice what Americans would call “date rape.” *Wayward Servants*, page 137. Turnbull mentions two instances of men giving orders to their wives. *Wayward Servants*, page 288–89; *Forest People*,

page 265. I have not found any instance in Turnbull's books of wives giving orders to their husbands.

Siriono: The Siriono did not beat their wives. Holmberg, page 128. But: "A woman is subservient to her husband." Holmberg, page 125. "The extended family is generally dominated by the oldest active male." Page 129. "[W]omen [...] are dominated by the men." Page 147. "Sexual advances are generally made by the men. [...] If a man is out in the forest alone with a woman he may throw her to the ground roughly and take his prize without so much saying a word." Page 163. Parents definitely prefer to have male children. Page 202. Also see pages 148, 156, 168–69, 210, 224.

Australian Aborigines: "Farther north and west [in Australia] [...] [p]erceptible power lay in the hands of the mature, fully initiated, and usually polygynous men of the age group from thirty to fifty, and the control over the women and younger males was shared between them." Carleton S. Coon, *The Hunting Peoples* (cited earlier), page 255. Among some Australian tribes, young women were forced to marry old men, mainly so that they should work for the men. Women who refused were beaten until they gave in. See Aldo Massola, *The Aborigines of South-Eastern Australia: As They Were*, The Griffin Press, Adelaide, Australia, 1971. I don't have the exact page, but you will probably find the foregoing between pages 70 and 80.

Time spent working

A good general discussion of this is by Elizabeth Cashdan, *Hunters and Gatherers: Economic Behaviour in Bands*, in Stuart Plattner (editor), *Economic Anthropology*, Stanford University Press, 1989, pages 21–48. Cashdan discusses a study by Richard Lee, who found that a certain group of Kung Bushmen worked a little more than forty hours per week. And she points out on pages 24–25 that there was evidence that Lee's study was made at a time of year when the Kung worked least, and they may have worked a great deal more at other times of year. She points out on page 26 that Lee's study did not include time spent on care of children. And on pages 24–25 she mentions other hunter-gatherers who worked longer hours than the Bushmen studied by Lee. Forty hours per week is probably a minimum estimate of the working time of fully nomadic hunter-gatherers. Gontran de Poncins, *Kabloon* (cited earlier), page 111, stated that the Eskimos with whom he lived toiled fifteen hours a day. He probably did not mean that they worked fifteen hours every day, but it is clear from his book that his Eskimos worked plenty hard.

Among the Mbuti pygmies who use nets to hunt, "Net-making is virtually a full-time occupation [...] in which both men and women indulge whenever they have both the spare time and the inclination." Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 131. Among the Siriono, the men hunted, on average, every other day. Holmberg, pages 75–76. They started at daybreak and returned to camp typically between four and six o'clock in the afternoon. Holmberg, pages 100–101. This makes on average at least eleven hours of hunting, and at three and a half days a week it comes to an average of 38 hours of hunting per week, at the least. Since the men also did a significant amount of work on days when they did not hunt (pages 76, 100), their work week, averaged over the year, had to be far more than forty hours. Actually, Holmberg estimated that the Siriono spent about half their waking time in hunting and foraging (page 222), which would mean about 56 hours a week in these activities alone. With other work included, the work week would have had to be well over sixty hours. The Siriono woman "enjoys even less respite from labor than her husband," and "the obligation of bringing her children to maturity leaves little time for rest."

Holmberg, page 224. For other information indicating how hard the Siriono had to work, see pages 87, 107, 157, 213, 220, 223, 246, 248–49, 254, 268.

Violence

As mentioned earlier, numerous examples of violence can be found in Coon's *The Hunting Peoples*. According to Gontran de Poncins, *Kabloona*, pages 116–120, 125, 162–165, 237–238, 244, homicides — usually by a stab in the back — were rather common among his Eskimos. The Mbuti pygmies were probably one of the least violent primitive peoples that I know of, since Turnbull reports no cases of homicide among them (apart from infanticide; see *Wayward Servants*, page 130). However, throughout *The Forest People* and *Wayward Servants* Turnbull mentions many beatings and fights with fists or sticks. Paul Schebesta, *Die Bambuti-Pygäen vom Ituri*, Volume I, Institute Royal Colonial Belge, Brussels, 1938, pages 81–84, reports evidence that during the first half of the 19th century the Mbuti waged deadly warfare against the village-dwelling Africans who also lived in their forest. (For infanticide, see Schebesta, page 138.)

Competition

The presence of competition in hunting-and-gathering societies is shown by the fights that occurred in some of them. See for example Coon, *Hunting Peoples*, pages 238, 252, 257–58. If a physical fight isn't a form of competition, then nothing is.

Fights may arise from competition for mates. For instance, Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, pages 206, mentions a woman who lost three teeth in fighting with another woman over a man. Coon, page 260, mentions fighting over women by Australian aboriginal men. Competition for food may also lead to quarreling. "This is not to say that sharing [of meat] takes place without any dispute or acrimony. On the contrary, the arguments that ensue when the hunt returns to camp are frequently long and loud [...]" Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 158. Coon refers to "vociferous arguments" over sharing of whale meat among certain Eskimos. *Hunting Peoples*, page 125.

Conclusion

I could go on and on citing concrete facts that show how ridiculous is the image of primitive peoples as non-competitive, vegetarian conservationists who had gender equality, respected the rights of animals, and didn't have to work for a living. But this letter is already too long, so the examples already given will have to suffice.

I don't mean to say that the hunting-and-gathering way of life was no better than modern life. On the contrary, I believe it was better beyond comparison. Many, perhaps most investigators who have studied hunter-gatherers have expressed their respect, their admiration, or even their envy of them. For example, Cashdan, page 21, refers to the hunting-and-gathering way of life as "highly successful." Coon, page XIX, refers to the "full and satisfactory lives" of hunter-gatherers. Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 26, writes:

[The Mbuti] were a people who had found in the forest something that made their life more than just worth living, something that made it, with all its hardships and problems and tragedies, a wonderful thing full of joy and happiness and free of care.

Schebesta writes, page 73:

How varied are the dangers, but also the joyous experiences on his hunting-excursions and countless journeys through the primeval forest! We of an unpoetic, mechanical age can have no more than an inkling of how deeply all of that touches the forest people in their mystical-magical thinking and shapes their attitude.

And on page 205:

The pygmies stand before us as one of the most natural of human races, as people who live exclusively in compliance with nature and without violation of their physical organism. Among their principal traits are an unusually sturdy naturalness and liveness, and an unparalleled cheerfulness and freedom from care. They are people whose lives pass in compliance with the laws of nature.

But obviously the reasons why primitive life was better than civilized life had nothing to do with gender equality, kindness to animals, non-competitiveness, or non-violence. Those values are the soft values of modern civilization. By projecting those values onto hunting-and-gathering societies, the GA Movement has created a myth of a primitive utopia that never existed in reality.

Green Anarchism and revolution

Thus, even though the GA Movement claims to reject civilization and modernity, it remains enslaved to some of the most important values of modern society. For this reason, the GA Movement cannot be an effective revolutionary movement.

In the first place, part of the GA Movements energy is deflected away from the real revolutionary objective — to eliminate modern technology and civilization in general — in favor of the pseudo-revolutionary issues of racism, sexism, animal rights, homosexual rights, and so forth.

In the second place, because of its commitment to these pseudo-revolutionary issues, the GA Movement may attract too many leftists — people who are less interested in getting rid of modern civilization than they are in the leftist issues of racism, sexism, etc. This would cause a further deflection of the movements energy away from the issues of technology and civilization.

In the third place, the objective of securing the rights of women, homosexuals, animals, and so forth, is incompatible with the objective of eliminating civilization, because women and homosexuals in primitive societies often do not have equality, and such societies are usually cruel to animals. If one's goal is to secure the rights of these groups, then ones best policy is to stick with modern civilization.

In the fourth place, the GA Movements adoption of many of the soft values of modern civilization, as well as its myth of a soft primitive utopia, attracts too many soft, dreamy, lazy, impractical people who are more inclined to retreat into utopian fantasies than to take effective, realistic action to get rid of the technoindustrial system.

In fact, there is grave danger that the GA Movement may take the same route as Christianity. Originally, under the personal leadership of Jesus Christ, Christianity was not only a religious movement but also a movement toward social revolution. As a purely religious movement Christianity turned out to be successful, but as a revolutionary movement it was a complete failure.

It did nothing to correct the social inequalities of its time, and as soon as the Christians had an opportunity to make a deal with the emperor Constantine they sold out and became part of the power-structure of the Roman Empire.

There appear to be some disquieting resemblances between the psychology of the GA Movement and that of early Christianity. The analogies between the two movements are striking: primitive utopia = Garden of Eden; development of civilization = the Fall, original sin, eating the apple from the Tree of Knowledge; the Revolution = Day of Judgment; return to primitive utopia = arrival of the Kingdom God. Veganism probably plays the same psychological role as the dietary restrictions of Christianity (fasting during Lent) and of other religions. The risks taken by activists in using their bodies to block logging machinery and so forth can be compared to the martyrdom of early Christians who died for their beliefs (except that the Christians' martyrdom required far more courage than the tactics of today's activists do). If the GA Movement takes the same path as Christianity, it too will be a complete failure as a revolutionary movement.

The GA Movement may be not only useless, but worse than useless, because it may be an obstacle to the development of an effective revolutionary movement. Since opposition to technology and civilization is an important part of the GA Movements program, young people who are concerned about what technological civilization is doing to the world are drawn into that movement. Certainly not all of these young people are leftists or soft, dreamy, ineffectual types; some of them have potential to become real revolutionaries. But in the GA Movement they are outnumbered by leftists and other useless people, so they are neutralized, they become corrupted, and their revolutionary potential is wasted. In this sense, the GA Movement could be called a destroyer of potential revolutionaries.

It will be necessary to build a new revolutionary movement that will keep itself strictly separate from the GA Movement and its soft, civilized values. I don't mean that there is anything wrong with gender equality, kindness to animals, tolerance of homosexuality, or the like. But these values have no relevance to the effort to eliminate technological civilization. They are not revolutionary values. An effective revolutionary movement will have to adopt instead the hard values of primitive societies, such as skill, self-discipline, honesty, physical and mental stamina, intolerance of externally-imposed restraints, capacity to endure physical pain, and, above all, courage.

P.S. Letters addressed to me sometimes fail to reach me, so if you should write to me and get no answer, you can assume that I did not receive your letter. — TJK

Sincerely yours,

Ted Kaczynski

Enclosures: Photocopies of pages 28 and 29 of magazine *Bears and Other Top Predators*, Volume 1, Issue 2.

Photocopy of article "Sibling Desperado," *Science News*, Volume 163, February 15, 2003.

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Progress versus Liberty

Ted Kaczynski

1971

In these pages it is argued that continued scientific and technical progress will inevitably result in the extinction of individual liberty. I use the word “inevitably” in the following sense: One might—possibly—imagine certain conditions of society in which freedom could coexist with unfettered technology, but these conditions do not actually exist, and we know of no way to bring them about, so that, in practice, scientific progress will result in the extinction of individual liberty. Toward the end of this essay we propose what appears to be the only thing that bears any resemblance to a practical remedy for this situation.

I hope that the reader will bear with me when I recite arguments and facts with which he may already be familiar. I make no claim to originality. I simply think that the case for the thesis stated above is convincing, and I am attempting to set forth the arguments, new and old, in as clear a manner as possible, in the hope that the reader will be persuaded to support the solution here suggested—which certainly is a very obvious solution, but rather hard for many people to swallow.

The power of society to control the individual person has recently been expanding very rapidly, and is expected to expand even more rapidly in the near future. Let us list a few of the more ominous developments as a reminder.

1. Propaganda and image-making techniques. In this context we must not neglect the role of movies, television, and literature, which commonly are regarded either as art or as entertainment, but which often consciously adopt certain points of view and thus serve as propaganda. Even when they do not consciously adopt an explicit point of view they still serve to indoctrinate the viewer or reader with certain values. We venerate the great writers of the past, but one who considers the matter objectively must admit that modern artistic techniques have developed to the point where the more skillfully constructed movies, novels, etc. of today are far more psychologically potent than, say, Shakespeare ever was. The best of them are capable of gripping and involving the reader very powerfully and thus are presumably quite effective in influencing his values. Also note the increasing extent to which the average person today is “living in the movies” as the saying is. People spend a large and increasing amount of time submitting to canned entertainment rather than

participating in spontaneous activities. As overcrowding and rules and regulations curtail opportunities for spontaneous activity, and as the developing techniques of entertainment make the canned product ever more attractive, we can assume that people will live more and more in the world of mass entertainment.

2. A growing emphasis among educators on “guiding” the child’s emotional development, coupled with an increasingly scientific attitude toward education. Of course, educators have always in some degree attempted to mold the attitudes of their pupils, but formerly they achieved only a limited degree of success, simply because their methods were unscientific. Educational psychology is changing this.

3. Operant conditioning, after the manner of B.F. Skinner and friends. (Of course, this cannot be entirely separated from item (2)).

4. Direct physical control of the emotions via electrodes and “chemitrodes” inserted in the brain. (See Jose M.R. Delgado’s book “Physical Control of the Mind.”)

5. Biofeedback training, after the manner of Joseph Kamiya and others.

6. Predicted “memory pills” or other drugs designed to improve memory or increase intelligence. (The reader possibly assumes that items (5) and (6) present no danger to freedom because their use is supposed to be voluntary, but I will argue that point later. See page 8.)

7. Predicted genetic engineering, eugenics, related techniques.

8. Marvin Minsky of MIT (one of the foremost computer experts in the country) and other computer scientists predict that within fifteen years or possibly much less there will be superhuman computers with intellectual capacities far beyond anything of which humans are capable. It is to be emphasized that these computers will not merely perform so-called “mechanical” operations; they will be capable of creative thought. Many people are incredulous at the idea of a creative computer, but let it be remembered that (unless one resorts to supernatural explanations of human thought) the human brain itself is an electro-chemical computer, operating according to the laws of physics and chemistry. Furthermore, the men who have predicted these computers are not crackpots but first-class scientists. It is difficult to say in advance just how much power these computers will put into the hands of what is vulgarly termed the establishment, but this power will probably be very great. Bear in mind that these computers will be wholly under the control of the scientific, bureaucratic, and business elite. The average person will have no access to them. Unlike the human brain, computers are more or less unrestricted as to size (and, more important, there is no restriction on the number of computers that can be linked together over a long distance to form a single brain), so that there is no restriction on their memories or on the amount of information they can assimilate and correlate. Computers are not subject to fatigue, daydreaming, or emotional problems. They work at fantastic speed. Given that a computer can duplicate the functions of the human brain, it seems clear in view of the advantages listed above that no human brain could possibly compete with such a computer in any field of endeavor.

9. Various electronic devices for surveillance. These are being used. For example, according to newspaper reports, the police of New York City have recently instituted a system of 24-hour television surveillance over certain problem areas of the city.

These are some of the more strikingly ominous facets of scientific progress, but it is perhaps more important to look at the effect of technology as a whole on our society. Technological progress is the basic cause of the continual increase in the number of rules and regulations. This is because many of our technological devices are more powerful and therefore more potentially destructive than the more primitive devices they replace (e.g., compare autos and horses) and also because the increasing complexity of the system makes necessary a more delicate coordination of its parts. Moreover, many devices of functional importance (e.g., electronic computers, television broadcasting equipment, jet planes) cannot be owned by the average person because of their size and costliness. These devices are controlled by large organizations such as corporations and governments and are used to further the purposes of the establishment. A larger and larger proportion of the individual's environment—not only his physical environment, but such factors as the kind of work he does, the nature of his entertainment, etc.—comes to be created and controlled by large organizations rather than by the individual himself. And this is a necessary consequence of technological progress, because to allow technology to be exploited in an unregulated, unorganized way would result in disaster.

Note that the problem here is not simply to make sure that technology is used only for good purposes. In fact, we can be reasonably certain that the powers which technology is putting into the hands of the establishment will be used to promote good and eliminate evil. These powers will be so great that within a few decades virtually all evil will have been eliminated. But, of course, "good" and "evil" here mean good and evil as interpreted by the social mainstream. In other words, technology will enable the social mainstream to impose its values universally. This will not come about through the machinations of power-hungry scoundrels, but through the efforts of socially responsible people who sincerely want to do good and who sincerely believe in freedom—but whose concept of freedom will be shaped by their own values, which will not necessarily be the same as your values or my values.

The most important aspect of this process will perhaps be the education of children, so let us use education as an example to illustrate the way the process works. Children will be taught—by methods which will become increasingly effective as educational psychology develops—to be creative, inquiring, appreciative of the arts and sciences, interested in their studies—perhaps they will even be taught nonconformity. But of course this will not be merely random nonconformity but "creative" nonconformity. Creative nonconformity simply means nonconformity that is directed toward socially desirable ends. For example, children may be taught (in the name of freedom) to liberate themselves from irrational prejudices of their elders, "irrational prejudices" being those values which are not conducive to the kind of society that most educators choose to regard as healthy. Children will be educated to be racially unbiased, to abhor violence, to fit into society without excessive conflict. By a series of small steps—each of which will be regarded not as a step toward behavioral engineering but as an improvement in educational technique—this system will become so effective that hardly any child will turn out to be other than what the educators desire. The educational system will then have become a form of psychological compulsion. The means employed in this "education" will be expanded to include methods which

we currently would consider disgusting, but since these methods will be introduced in a series of small steps, most people will not object—especially since children trained to take a “scientific” or “rational” attitude toward education will be growing up to replace their elders as they die off.

For instance, chemical and electrical manipulation of the brain will at first be used only on children considered to be insane, or at least severely disturbed. As people become accustomed to such practices, they will come to be used on children who are only moderately disturbed. Now, whatever is on the furthest fringes of the abnormal generally comes to be regarded with abhorrence. As the more severe forms of disturbances are eliminated, the less severe forms will come to constitute the outer fringe; they will thus be regarded as abhorrent and hence as fair game for chemical and electrical manipulation. Eventually, all forms of disturbance will be eliminated—and anything that brings an individual into conflict with his society will make him unhappy and therefore will be a disturbance. Note that this whole process does not presuppose any antilibertarian philosophy on the part of educators or psychologists, but only a desire to do their jobs more effectively.

Consider: Today, how can one argue against sex education? Sex education is designed not simply to present children with the bald facts of sex; it is designed to guide children to a healthy attitude toward sex. And who can argue against that? Think of all the misery suffered as a result of Victorian repressions, sexual perversions, frigidity, unwanted pregnancies, and venereal [sic.] disease. If much of this can be eliminated by instilling “healthy” (as the social mainstream interprets that word) sexual attitudes in children, who can deny it to them? But it will be equally impossible to argue against any of the other steps that will eventually lead to the complete engineering of the human personality. Each step will be equally humanitarian in its goals.

There is no distinct line between “guidance” or “influence” and manipulation. When a technique of influence becomes so effective that it achieves its desired effect in nearly every case, then it is no longer influence but compulsion. Thus influence evolves into compulsion as science improves technique.

Research has shown that exposure to television violence makes the viewer more prone to violence himself. The very existence of this knowledge makes it a foregone conclusion that restrictions will eventually be placed on televised violence, either by the government or by the TV industry itself, in order to make children less prone to develop violent personalities. This is an element of manipulation. It may be that you feel an end to television violence is desirable and that the degree of manipulation involved is insignificant. But science will reveal, one at a time, a hundred other factors in entertainment that have a “desirable” or “undesirable” effect on personality. In the case of each one of these factors, knowledge will make manipulation inevitable. When the whole array of factors has become known, we will have drifted into large-scale manipulation. In this way, research leads automatically to calculated indoctrination.

By way of a further example, let us consider genetic engineering. This will not come into use as a result of a conscious decision by the majority of people to introduce genetic engineering. It will begin with certain “progressive” parents who will voluntarily avail themselves of genetic engineering opportunities in order to eliminate the risk of certain gross physical defects in their offspring. Later, this engineering will be extended to include elimination of mental defects and treatment which will predispose the child to somewhat higher intelligence. (Note that the question of what constitutes a mental “defect” is a value-judgement. Is homosexuality, for example, a defect? Some homosexuals would say “no.” But there is no objectively true or false answer to such a question.) As methods are improved to the point where the minority of parents who use

genetic engineering are producing noticeably healthier, smarter offspring, more and more parents will want genetic engineering. When the majority of children are genetically engineered, even those parents who might otherwise be antagonistic toward genetic engineering will feel obliged to use it so that their children will be able to compete in a world of superior people—superior, at least relative to the social milieu in which they live. In the end, genetic engineering will be made compulsory because it will be regarded as cruel and irresponsible for a few eccentric parents to produce inferior offspring by refusing to use it. Bear in mind that this engineering will involve mental as well as physical characteristics; indeed, as scientists explain mental traits on the basis of physiology, neurology, and biochemistry, it will become more and more difficult to distinguish between “mental” and “physical” traits.

Observe that once a society based on psychological, genetic, and other forms of human engineering has come into being, it will presumably last forever, because people will all be engineered to favor human engineering and the totally collective society, so that they will never become dissatisfied with this kind of society. Furthermore, once human engineering, the linking of human minds with computers, and other things of that nature have come into extensive use, people will probably be altered so much that it will no longer be possible for them to exist as independent beings, either physically or psychologically. Indeed, technology has already made it impossible for us to live as physically independent beings, for the skills which enabled primitive man to live off the country have been lost. We can survive only by acting as components of a huge machine which provides for our physical needs; and as technology invades the domain of mind, it is safe to assume that human beings will become as dependent psychologically on technology as they now are physically. We can see the beginning of this already in the inability of some people to avoid boredom without television and in the need of others to use tranquilizers in order to cope with the tensions of modern society.

The foregoing predictions are supported by the opinions of at least some responsible writers. See especially Jacques Ellul's “The Technological Society” and the section titled “Social Controls” in Kahn and Wiener's “The Year 2,000.”

Now we come to the question: What can be done to prevent all this? Let us first consider the solution sketched by Perry London in his book “Behavior Control.” This solution makes a convenient example because its defects are typical of other proposed solutions. London's idea is, briefly, this: Let us not attempt to interfere with the development of behavioral technology, but let us all try to be as aware of and as knowledgeable about this technology as we can; let us not keep this technology in the hands of a scientific elite, but disseminate it among the population at large; people can then use this technology to manipulate themselves and protect themselves from manipulation by others. However, on the grounds that “there must be some limits” London advocates that behavior control should be imposed by society in certain areas. For example, he suggests that people should be made to abhor violence and that psychological means should be used to make businessmen stop destroying the forests. (NOTE: I do not currently have access to a copy of London's book, and so I have had to rely on memory in describing his views. My memory is probably correct here, but in order to be honest I should admit the possibility of error.)

My first objection to London's scheme is a personal one. I simply find the sphere of freedom that he favors too narrow for me to accept. But his solution suffers from other flaws.

He proposes to use psychological controls where they are not necessary, and more for the purpose of gratifying the liberal intellectual's esthetic sensibilities than because of a practical need. It is true that “there must be some limits”—on violence, for example—but the threat of imprison-

ment seems to be an adequate limitation. To read about violence is frightening, but violent crime is not a significant cause of mortality in comparison to other causes. Far more people are killed in automobile accidents than through violent crime. Would London also advocate psychological elimination of those personalities that are inclined to careless driving? The fact that liberal intellectuals and many others get far more excited over violence than they do over careless driving would seem to indicate that their antagonism toward violence arises not primarily from a concern for human life but from a strong emotional antipathy toward violence itself. Thus it appears that London's proposal to eliminate violence through psychological control results not from practical necessity but from a desire on London's part to engineer some of his own values into the public at large.

This becomes even clearer when we consider London's willingness to use psychological engineering to stop businessmen from destroying forests. Obviously, psychological engineering cannot accomplish this until the establishment can be persuaded to carry out the appropriate program of engineering. But if the establishment can be persuaded to do this, then they can equally well be persuaded to pass conservation laws strict enough to accomplish the same purpose. And if such laws are passed, the psychological engineering is superfluous. It seems clear that here, again, London is attracted to psychological engineering simply because he would like to see the general public share certain of his values.

When London proposes to us systematic psychological controls over certain aspects of the personality, with the intention that these controls shall not be extended to others areas, he is assuming that the generation following his own will agree with his judgment as to how far the psychological controls should reach. This assumption is almost certainly false. The introduction of psychological controls in some areas (which London approves) will set the stage for the later introduction of controls in other areas (which London would not approve), because it will change the culture in such a way as to make people more receptive to the concept of psychological controls. As long as any behavior is permitted which is not in the best interests of the collective social organization, there will always be the temptation to eliminate the worst of this behavior through human engineering. People will introduce new controls to eliminate only the worst of this behavior, without intending that any further extension of the controls should take place afterward; but in fact they will be indirectly causing further extensions of the controls because whenever new controls are introduced, the public, as it becomes used to the controls, will change its conception of what constitutes an appropriate degree of control. In other words, whatever the amount of control to which people have become accustomed, they will regard that amount as right and good and they will regard a little further extension of control as negligible price to pay for the elimination of some form of behavior that they find shocking.

London regards the wide dissemination of behavioral technology among the public as a means by which the people can protect themselves against psychological manipulation by the established powers. But if it is really true that people can use this knowledge to avoid manipulation in most areas, why won't they also be able to use it to avoid being made to abhor violence, or to avoid control in other areas where London thinks they should be controlled? London seems to assume that people will be unable to avoid control in just those areas where he thinks they should be controlled, but that they will be able to avoid control in just those areas where he thinks they should not be controlled.

London refers to "awareness" (of sciences relating to the mind) as the individual's "sword and buckler" against manipulation by the establishment. In Roman times a man might have a real

sword and buckler just as good as those of the emperor's legionaries, but that did not enable him to escape oppression. Similarly, if a man of the future has a complete knowledge of behavioral psychology it will not enable him to escape psychological control any more than the possession of a machine-gun or a tank would enable him to escape physical control. The resources of an organized society are just too great for any individual to resist no matter how much he knows.

With the vast expansion of knowledge in the behavioral sciences, biochemistry, cybernetics, physiology, genetics, and other disciplines which have the potential to affect human behavior, it is probably already impossible (and, if not, it will soon become impossible) for any individual to keep abreast of it all. In any case, we would all have to become, to some degree, specialists in behavior control in order to maintain London's "awareness." What about those people who just don't happen to be attracted to that kind of science, or to any science? It would be agony for them to have to spend long hours studying behavioral technology in order to maintain their freedom.

Even if London's scheme of freedom through "awareness" were feasible, it could, or at least would, be carried out only by an elite of intellectuals, businessmen, etc. Can you imagine the members of uneducated minority groups, or, for that matter, the average middle-class person, having the will and the ability to learn enough to compete in a world of psychological manipulation? It will be a case of the smart and the powerful getting more powerful while the stupid and the weak get (relatively) stupider and weaker; for it is the smart and the powerful who will have the readiest access to behavioral technology and the greatest ability to use it effectively.

This is one reason why devices for improving one's mental or psychological capabilities (e.g., biofeedback training, memory pills, linking of human minds with computers) are dangerous to freedom even though their use is voluntary. For example, it will not be physically possible for everyone to have his own full-scale computer in his basement to which he can link his brain. The best computer facilities will be reserved for those whom society judges most worthy: government officials, scientists, etc. Thus the already powerful will be made more powerful.

Also, the use of such mind-augmentation devices will not remain voluntary. All our modern conveniences were originally introduced as optional benefits which one could take or leave as one chose. However, as a result of the introduction of these benefits, society changed its structure in such a way that the use of modern conveniences is now compulsory: for it would be physically impossible to live in modern society without extensively using devices provided by technology. Similarly, the use of mind-augmenting devices, though nominally voluntary, will become in practice compulsory. When these devices have reached a high development and have come into wide use, a person refusing to use them would be putting himself in the position of a dumb animal in a world of supermen. He would simply be unable to function in a society structured around the assumption that most people have vastly augmented mental abilities.

By virtue of their very power, the devices for augmenting or modifying the human mind and personality will have to be governed by extensive rules and regulations. As the human mind comes to be more and more an artifact created by means of such devices, these rules and regulations will come to be rules and regulations governing the structure of the human mind.

An important point: London does not even consider the question of human engineering in infancy (let alone genetic engineering before conception). A two-year-old obviously would not be able to apply London's philosophy of "awareness"; yet it will be possible in the future to engineer a young child so that he will grow up to have the type of personality that is desired

by whoever has charge of him. What is the meaning of freedom for a person whose entire personality has been planned and created by someone else?

London's solution suffers from another flaw that is of particular importance because it is shared by all libertarian solutions to the technology problem that have ever come to my attention. The problem is supposed to be solved by propounding and popularizing a certain libertarian philosophy. This approach is unlikely to achieve anything. Our liberty is not deteriorating as a result of any antilibertarian philosophy. Most people in this country profess to believe in freedom. Our liberty is deteriorating as a result of the way people do their jobs and behave in relation to technology on a day-to-day basis. The system has come to be set up in such a way that it is usually comfortable to do that which strengthens the organization. When a person in a position of responsibility sets to eliminate that which is contrary to established values, he is rewarded with the esteem of his fellows and in other ways. Police officials who introduce new surveillance devices, educators who introduce more advanced techniques for molding children, do not do so through disrespect for freedom; they do so because they are rewarded with the approval of other police officials or educators and also because they get an inward satisfaction from having accomplished their assigned tasks not only competently, but creatively. A hands-off approach toward the child's personality would be best from the point of view of freedom, but this approach will not be taken because the most intelligent and capable educators crave the satisfaction of doing their work creatively. They want to do more with the child, not less. The greatest reward that a person gets from furthering the ends of the organization may well be simply the opportunity for purposeful, challenging, important activity—an opportunity that is otherwise hard to come by in society. For example, Marvin Minsky does not work on computers because he is antagonistic to freedom, but because he loves the intellectual challenge. Probably he believes in freedom, but since he is a computer specialist he manages to persuade himself that computers will tend to liberate man.

The main point here is that the danger to freedom is caused by the way people work and behave on a day-to-day basis in relation to technology; and the way people behave in relation to technology is determined by powerful social and psychological forces. To oppose these forces a comparatively weak force like a body of philosophy is simply hopeless. You may persuade the public to accept your philosophy, but most people will not significantly change their behavior as a result. They will invent rationalizations to reconcile their behavior with the philosophy, or they will say that what they do as individuals is too insignificant to change the course of events, or they will simply confess themselves too weak to live up to the philosophy. Conceivably a school of philosophy might change a culture over a long period of time if the social forces tending in the opposite direction were weak. But the social forces guiding the present development of our society are obviously strong, and we have very little time left—another three decades likely will take us past the point of no return.

Thus a philosophy will be ineffective unless that philosophy is accompanied by a program of concrete action of a type which does not ask people to voluntarily change the way they live and work—a program which demands little effort or willpower on the part of most people. Such a program would probably have to be a political or legislative one. A philosophy is not likely to make people change their daily behavior, but it might (with luck) induce them to vote for politicians who support a certain program. Casting a vote requires only a casual commitment, not a strenuous application of willpower. So we are left with the question: What kind of legislative program would have a chance of saving freedom?

I can think of only two possibilities that are halfway plausible. The discussion of one of these I will leave until later. The other, and the one that I advocate, is this: In simple terms, stop scientific progress by withdrawing all major sources of research funds. In more detail, begin by withdrawing all or most federal aid to research. If an abrupt withdrawal would cause economic problems, then phase it out as rapidly as is practical. Next, pass legislation to limit or phase out research support by educational institutions which accept public funds. Finally, one would hope to pass legislation prohibiting all large corporations and other large organizations from supporting scientific research. Of course, it would be necessary to eventually bring about similar changes throughout the world, but, being Americans, we must start with the United States; which is just as well, since the United States is the world's most technologically advanced country. As for economic or other disruption that might be caused by the elimination of scientific progress—this disruption is likely to be much less than that which would be caused by the extremely rapid changes brought on by science itself.

I admit that, in view of the firmly entrenched position of Big Science, it is unlikely that such a legislative program could be enacted. However, I think there is at least some chance that such a program could be put through in stages over a period of years, if one or more active organizations were formed to make the public aware of the probable consequences of continued scientific progress and to push for the appropriate legislation. Even if there is only a small chance of success, I think that chance is worth working for, since the alternative appears to be the loss of all human freedom.

This solution is bound to be attacked as “simplistic.” But this ignores the fundamental question, namely: Is there any better solution or indeed any other solution at all? My personal opinion is that there is no other solution. However, let us not be dogmatic. Maybe there is a better solution. But the point is this: If there is such a solution, no one at present seems to know just what it is. Matters have progressed to the point where we can no longer afford to sit around just waiting for something to turn up. By stopping scientific progress now, or at any rate slowing it drastically, we could at least give ourselves breathing space during which we could attempt to work out another solution, if one is possible.

There is one putative solution the discussion of which I have reserved until now. One might consider enacting some kind of bill of rights designed to protect freedom from technological encroachment. For the following reasons I do not believe that such a solution would be effective.

In the first place, a document which attempted to define our sphere of freedom in a few simple principles would either be too weak to afford real protection, or too strong to be compatible with the functioning of the present society. Thus, a suitable bill of rights would have to be excessively complex, and full of exceptions, qualifications, and delicate compromises. Such a bill would be subject to repeated amendments for the sake of social expedience; and where formal amendment is inconvenient, the document would simply be reinterpreted. Recent decisions of the Supreme Court, whether one approves of them or not, show how much the import of a document can be altered through reinterpretations. Our present Bill of Rights would have been ineffective if there had been in America strong social forces acting against freedom of speech, freedom of worship, etc. Compare what is happening to the right to bear arms, which currently runs counter to basic social trends. Whether you approve or disapprove of that “right” is beside the point—the point is that the constitutional guarantee cannot stand indefinitely against powerful social forces.

If you are an advocate of the bill-of-rights approach to the technology problem, test yourself by attempting to write a sample section on, say, genetic engineering. Just how will you define the

term “genetic engineering” and how will you draw the line, in words, between that engineering which is to be permitted and that which is to be prohibited? Your law will either have to be too strong to pass; or so vague that it can be readily reinterpreted as social standards evolve; or excessively complex and detailed. In this last case, the law will not pass as a constitutional amendment, because for practical reasons a law that attempts to deal with such a problem in great detail will have to be relatively easy to change as needs and circumstances change. But then, of course, the law will be changed continually for the sake of social expedience and so will not serve as a barrier to the erosion of freedom.

And who would actually work out the details of such a bill of rights? Undoubtedly, a committee of congressmen, or a commission appointed by the president, or some other group of organization men. They would give us some fine libertarian rhetoric, but they would be unwilling to pay the price of real, substantial freedom—they would not write a bill that would sacrifice any significant amount of the organization’s power.

I have said that a bill of rights would not be able to stand for long against the pressures for science, progress, and improvement. But laws that bring a halt to scientific research would be quite different in this respect. The prestige of science would be broken. With the financial basis gone, few young people would find it practical to enter scientific careers. After, say three decades or so, our society would have ceased to be progress-oriented and the most dangerous of the pressures that currently threaten our freedom would have relaxed. A bill of rights would not bring about this relaxation.

This, by the way, is one reason why the elimination of research merely in a few sensitive areas would be inadequate. As long as science is a large and going concern, there will be the persistent temptation to apply it in new areas; but this pressure would be broken if science were reduced to a minor role.

Let us try to summarize the role of technology in relation to freedom. The principal effect of technology is to increase the power of society collectively. Now, there is a more or less unlimited number of value-judgments that lie before us: for example: whether an individual should or should not have puritanical attitudes toward sex; whether it is better to have rain fall at night or during the day. When society acquires power over such a situation, generally a preponderance of the social forces look upon one or the other of the alternatives as Right. These social forces are then able to use the machinery of society to impose their choice universally; for example, they may mold children so successfully that none ever grows up to have puritanical attitudes toward sex, or they may use weather engineering to guarantee that the rain falls only at night. In this way there is a continual narrowing of the possibilities that exist in the world. The eventual result will be a world in which there is only one system of values. The only way out seems to be to halt the ceaseless extension of society’s power.

I propose that you join me and a few other people to whom I am writing in an attempt to found an organization dedicated to stopping federal aid to scientific research. It would be a mistake, I think, to reject this suggestion out of hand on the basis of some vague dogma such as “knowledge is good” or “science is the hope of man.” Sure, knowledge is good, but how high a price, in terms of freedom, are we going to pay for knowledge? You may be understandably reluctant to join an organization about which you know nothing, but you know as much about it as I do. It hasn’t been started yet. You would be one of the founding members. I claim to have no particular qualifications for trying to start such an organization, and I have no idea how to go about it, I am only making an attempt because no better qualified person has yet done so. I am simply trying

to bring together a few highly intelligent and thoughtful people who would be willing to take over the task.

<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2017/04/26/progress-versus-liberty-the-1971-essay/>

Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself

Ted Kaczynski

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I.

Our discussion deals with self-propagating systems. By a self-propagating system ('self-prop system' for short) we mean a system that tends to promote its own survival and propagation. A system may propagate itself in either or both of two ways: The system may indefinitely increase its own size and/or power, or it may give rise to new systems that possess some of its own traits.

The most obvious examples of self-propagating systems are biological organisms. *Groups* of biological organisms can also constitute self-prop systems; e.g., wolf packs and hives of honeybees. Particularly important for our purposes are self-prop systems that consist of groups of human beings. For example, nations, corporations, labor unions, and political parties; also some groups that are not clearly delimited and lack formal organization, such as schools of thought, social networks, and subcultures. Just as wolf packs and beehives are self-propagating without any conscious intention on the part of wolves or bees to propagate their packs or their hives, there is no reason why a human group cannot be self-propagating independently of any intention on the part of the individuals who comprise the group.

If A and B are systems of any kind (self-propagating or not), and if A is a functioning component of B, then we will call A a *subsystem* of B, and we will call B a *supersystem* of A. For example, in human hunting-and-gathering societies, individuals are members of bands, and bands often are organized into tribes. Individuals, bands, and tribes are all self-prop systems. The individual is a subsystem of the band, the band is a subsystem of the tribe, the tribe is a supersystem of each band that belongs to it, and each band is a supersystem of every individual who belongs to that band. It is also true that each individual is a subsystem of the tribe and that the tribe is a supersystem of every individual who belongs to a band that belongs to the tribe.

The principle of natural selection is operative not only in biology, but in any environment in which self-propagating systems are present. The principle can be stated roughly as follows:

Those self-propagating systems having the traits that best suit them to survive and propagate themselves tend to survive and propagate themselves better than other self-propagating systems.

This of course is an obvious tautology, so it tells us nothing new. But it can serve to call our attention to factors that we might otherwise overlook.

We are about to advance several propositions. We can't prove these propositions, but they are intuitively plausible and they seem consistent with the observable behavior of self-propagating systems as represented by biological organisms and human (formal and informal) organizations. In short, we believe these propositions to be true, or as close to the truth as they need to be for present purposes.

Proposition 1. In any environment that is sufficiently rich, self-propagating systems will arise, and natural selection will lead to the evolution of self-propagating systems having increasingly complex, subtle, and sophisticated means of surviving and propagating themselves.

Natural selection operates relative to particular periods of time. Let's start at some given point in time that we can call Time Zero. Those self-prop systems that are most likely to survive (or have surviving progeny) five-years from Time Zero are those that are best suited to survive and

propagate themselves (in competition⁶³ with other self-prop systems) during the five-year period following Time Zero. These will not necessarily be the same as those self-prop systems that, in the absence of competition during the five-year period, would be best suited to survive and propagate themselves during the thirty years following Time Zero. Similarly, the systems best suited to survive competition during the first thirty years following Time Zero are not necessarily those that, in the absence of competition during the thirty-year period, would be best suited to survive and propagate themselves for two hundred years. And so forth.

For example, suppose a forested region is occupied by a number of small, rival kingdoms. Those kingdoms that clear the most land for agricultural use can plant more crops and therefore can support a larger population than other kingdoms. This gives them a military advantage over their rivals. If any kingdom restrains itself from excessive forest clearance out of concern for the long-term consequences, then that kingdom places itself at a military disadvantage and is eliminated by the more powerful kingdoms. Thus the region comes to be dominated by kingdoms that cut down their forests recklessly. The resulting deforestation leads eventually to ecological disaster and therefore to the collapse of all the kingdoms. Here a trait that is advantageous or even indispensable for a kingdom's short-term survival—recklessness in cutting trees—leads in the long term to the demise of the same kingdom.⁶⁴

This example illustrates the fact that, where a self-prop system exercises foresight, in the sense that concern for its own long-term survival and propagation leads it to place limitations on its efforts for short-term survival and propagation, the system puts itself at a competitive disadvantage relative to those self-prop systems that pursue short-term survival and propagation without restraint. This leads us to

⁶³ When we refer to “competition” we don’t necessarily mean intentional or willful competition. Competition, as we use the term, is just something that happens. For example, plants certainly have no intention to compete with one another. It is simply a fact that the plants that most effectively survive and propagate themselves tend to replace those plants that less effectively survive and propagate themselves. “Competition” in this sense of the word is just an inevitable process that goes on with or without any intention on the part of the competitors.

⁶⁴ Something along these lines, but more complicated; probably happened among the ancient Maya. See Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Penguin, New York, 2011, pp. 157-177. Probably many good examples could be drawn from the realm of economics. I don’t know enough about economics to cite any specific examples, but something like the following might well occur:

Two savings-and-loan associations, X and Y, compete for the same depositors. During a real estate boom X makes money hand over fist by investing massively in real estate and therefore is able to offer its depositors a higher rate of interest than does Y, which follows a more cautious investment policy. As a result, Y loses most of its depositors to X. Perhaps Y will go out of business; if not, it will certainly be greatly weakened. A few years later the real estate bubble bursts and X goes broke. Thus, a trait (willingness to take risks) that is conducive, and perhaps necessary, to the survival of X in the short term, leads to the demise of X in the long term. I rather suspect that this example represents in grossly simplified form a phenomenon that occurs fairly often in the world of finance.

Proposition 2. In the short term, natural selection favors self-propagating systems that pursue⁶⁵ their own short-term advantage with little or no regard for long-term consequences.

A corollary to Proposition 2 is

Proposition 3. Self-propagating subsystems of a given supersystem tend to become dependent on the supersystem and on the specific conditions that prevail within the supersystem.

This means that between the supersystem and its self-prop subsystems, there tends to develop a relationship of such a nature that, in the event of the destruction of the supersystem or of any drastic acceleration of changes in the conditions prevailing within the supersystem, the subsystems can neither survive nor propagate themselves. A self-prop system with sufficient foresight would make provision for its own or its descendants' survival in the event of the collapse or destabilization of the supersystem. But as long as the supersystem exists and remains more or less stable, natural selection favors those subsystems that take fullest advantage of the opportunities available within the supersystem, and disfavors those subsystems that "waste" some of their resources in preparing themselves to survive the eventual destabilization of the supersystem. Under these conditions, self-prop systems will tend very strongly to become incapable of surviving the destabilization of any supersystem to which they belong.

Like the other propositions put forward in this essay, Proposition 3 has to be applied with a dose of common sense. If the supersystem in question is weak and loosely organized, or if it has no more than a modest effect on the conditions in which its subsystems exist, the subsystems may not become strongly dependent on the supersystem. Among hunter-gatherers in some (not all) environments, a nuclear family would be able to survive and propagate itself independently of the band to which it belongs. Because tribes of hunter-gatherers are loosely organized, it seems certain that in almost all cases a hunting-and-gathering band would be able to survive independently of the tribe to which it belongs. Many labor unions might be able to survive the demise of a confederation of labor unions such as the AFL-CIO, because such an event might not fundamentally affect the conditions under which labor unions have to function. But labor unions could not survive the demise of the modern industrial society, or even the demise merely of the legal and constitutional framework that makes it possible for labor unions as we know them to operate.

Clearly a system cannot be effectively organized for its own survival and propagation unless the different parts of the system can promptly communicate with one another and lend aid to one another. Moreover, in order to operate effectively throughout a given geographical region, a

⁶⁵ When we refer to the exercise of "foresight" or to the "pursuit" of advantage, our reference is not limited to the conscious, intelligent foresight or to the intentional pursuit of advantage. We include any behavior (interpreting that word in the broadest possible sense) that has the same effect as the exercise of foresight, or the same effect as the pursuit of advantages, regardless of whether the behavior is guided by any mechanism that could be described as "intelligence". (Compare Note 1.) For example, any vertebrates that, in the process of evolving into land animals, had the "foresight" to "attempt" to retain their gills (an advantage if they ever had to return to water) were at a disadvantage due to the biological cost of maintaining organs that were useless on land. Hence, they lost out in "competition" with those incipient land animals that "pursued" their short-term advantage by getting rid of their gills. By losing their gills, reptiles, birds, and mammals have become dependent on access to the atmosphere, and that's why whales today will drown if forced to remain submerged too long.

self-prop system must be able to receive prompt information from, and act promptly upon, every part of the region. Consequently,

Proposition 4. Problems of transportation and communication impose a limit on the size of the geographical region over which a self-prop system can extend its operations.

Human experience suggests:

Proposition 5. The most important and the only consistent limit on the size of the geographical regions over which self-propagating human groups extend their operations, is the limit imposed by the available means of transportation and communication. In other words, while not all self-propagating human groups tend to extend their operations over a region of maximum size, natural selection tends to produce *some* self-propagating human groups that operate over regions approaching the maximum size allowed by the available means of transportation and communication.

Today there is quick transportation and almost instant communication between any two parts of the world. Hence,

Proposition 6. In modern times, natural selection tends to produce some self-propagating human groups whose operations span the entire globe. Moreover, even if humans are someday replaced by machines or other entities, natural selection will still tend to produce some self-propagating systems whose operations span the entire globe.

Current experience strongly confirms this proposition: We see global “superpowers”, global corporations, global political movements, global religions, global criminal networks, etc. Proposition 6, we argue, is not dependent on any particular traits of human beings but only on the general properties of self-prop systems, so there is no reason to doubt that the proposition will remain true if and when humans are replaced by other entities: Natural selection will continue to produce or maintain self-prop systems whose operations span the entire globe.

Let’s refer to such systems as *global* self-prop systems. Instant worldwide communications are still a relatively new phenomenon and their full consequences have yet to be developed; in the future we can expect global self-prop systems to play an even more important role than they do today.

Proposition 7. Where (as today) problems of transportation and communication do not constitute effective limitations on the size of the geographical regions over which self-propagating systems operate, natural selection tends to create a world in which power is mostly concentrated in the possession of a relatively small number of global self-propagating systems.

This proposition too is suggested by human experience. But it’s easy to see why the proposition is true independently of anything specifically human: Among global self-prop systems, natural selection will favor those that have the greatest power; global or large-scale self-prop

systems that are weaker will tend to be eliminated or subjugated. Small-scale self-prop systems that are too numerous or too subtle to be noticed individually by the dominant global self-prop systems may retain some degree of autonomy, but each of them will have only local influence. It may be answered that a coalition of small-scale self-prop systems could challenge the global self-prop systems, but if small-scale self-prop systems organize themselves into a coalition having worldwide influence, the coalition will itself become a global self-prop system.

We can speak of the “world-system”, meaning all things that exist on Earth, together with the functional relations among them. The world-system probably should not be regarded as a self-prop system, but whether it is or not is irrelevant for present purposes.

To summarize, then, the world-system is approaching a condition in which it will be dominated by a relatively small number of extremely powerful global self-prop systems. These global systems will compete for power—as they must do in order to have any chance of survival—and they will compete for power *in the short term*, with little or no regard for long-term consequences (Proposition 2). Under these conditions, intuition tells us that desperate competition among the global self-prop systems will tear the world-system apart.

Let’s try to formulate this intuition more clearly. For some hundreds of millions of years the terrestrial environment has had some degree of stability, in the sense that conditions on Earth, though variable, have remained within certain limits that have allowed the evolution of complex life-forms such as fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. In the immediate future, all self-prop systems on this planet, including self-propagating human groups and any purely machine-based systems derived from them, will have evolved while conditions have remained within these same limits, or at most within somewhat wider ones. By Proposition 3, the Earth’s self-prop systems will have become dependent for their survival on the fact that conditions have remained within these limits. Large-scale self-prop human groups, as well as any purely machine-based self-prop systems, will be dependent also on conditions of more recent origin relating to the way the world-system is organized; for example, conditions pertaining to economic relationships. The rapidity with which these conditions change must remain within certain limits, else the self-prop systems will not survive.

This doesn’t mean that all of the world’s self-prop systems will die if future conditions, or the rapidity with which they change, slightly exceed some of these limits, but it does mean that if conditions go far enough beyond some of the limits many self-prop systems are likely to die, and if conditions ever vary wildly enough outside of the limits, then, with near certainty, all of the world’s more complex self-prop systems will die without progeny.

With several self-prop systems of global reach, armed with the colossal powers of modern technology and competing for immediate power while exercising no self-restraint from concern for long-term consequences, it is extremely difficult to imagine that conditions on this planet will not be pushed far outside of all earlier limits and battered around erratically, with the result that all of the Earth’s more complex self-prop systems will die without progeny.

Notice that the crucial factor here is the availability of rapid, worldwide transportation and communication, as a consequence of which there exist global self-prop systems. There is another way of seeing that this situation will lead to radical disruption of the world-system. Students of industrial accidents know that a system is most likely to suffer a catastrophic breakdown when (i) the system is highly complex (meaning that small disruptions can produce unpredictable consequences), and (ii) tightly linked (meaning that a breakdown in one part of the system spreads

quickly to other parts).⁶⁶ The world-system has been highly complex for a long time. The new factor is that of rapid, worldwide transportation and communication, as a result of which the world-system and all global self-prop systems are now tightly linked. Until relatively recently, self-prop systems were local phenomena, hence the destructive effects of their competition also were usually local. Today, because global self-prop systems compete worldwide, because they are tightly linked, because the world-system as a whole is tightly linked, and because technology provides global self-prop systems with colossal power, global disaster sooner or later is a near certainty.

An obvious answer to the foregoing arguments will be to assert that destructive competition among global self-prop systems isn't inevitable: A single global self-prop system might succeed in eliminating all of its competitors and thereafter dominate the world alone; or, because global self-prop systems would be relatively few in number, they might come to an agreement among themselves whereby they would refrain from all dangerous or destructive forms of competition. However, while it is easy to talk about such an agreement, it is vastly more difficult to actually conclude one and enforce it. Just look: The world's leading powers today have not been able to agree on the elimination of war or of nuclear weapons, or on the limitation of emissions' of carbon dioxide.

But let's be optimistic and assume that the world has come under the domination of a single, unified system, which may consist of a single global self-prop system victorious over all its rivals, or may be a composite of several global self-prop systems that have bound themselves together through an agreement that eliminates all destructive competition among them. The resulting "world peace" will be unstable for three separate reasons.

First, the world-system will still be highly complex and tightly linked.

Second, prior to the arrival of "world peace" and for the sake of their own survival and propagation, the self-prop subsystems of a given global self-prop system (their supersystem) will have put aside, or at least moderated, their mutual conflicts in order to present a united front against any immediate external threats or challenges to the supersystem (which are also threats or challenges to themselves). In fact, the supersystem would never have been successful enough to become a global self-prop system if competition between its most powerful self-prop subsystems had not been moderated.

But once a global self-prop system has eliminated its competitors, or has entered into an agreement that frees it from dangerous competition from other global self-prop systems, there will no longer be an *immediate* external threat to induce unity or a moderation of conflict among the self-prop system. In view of Proposition 2—which tells us that self-prop systems will compete with little regard for long-term consequences—unrestrained and therefore destructive competition will break out among the most powerful self-prop subsystems of the global self-prop system in question. This argument of course assumes that the most powerful self-prop subsystems will be "intelligent" enough to distinguish between a situation in which their supersystem is subject to an immediate external threat, and a situation in which their supersystem is not subject to an immediate external threat. The assumption, however, seems highly probable.

Benjamin Franklin pointed out that "the great Affairs of the World, the Wars Revolutions, &c. are carried on and effected by Parties." Each of the "Parties", according to Franklin, is pursuing its own collective advantage, but "as soon as a Party has gain'd its general Point"—and therefore, pre-

⁶⁶ See "Of toxic bonds and crippled nuke plants", *The Week*, January 28, 2011, p. 42.

sumably, no longer faces immediate conflict with an external adversary—“each Member becomes Intent upon his particular Interest, which thwarting others, breaks that Party into Divisions, and occasions...Confusion.”⁶⁷

Franklin’s statement doubtless represents somewhat of an oversimplification, but history does generally confirm that when large human groups are not held together by any immediate external challenge, they tend strongly to break up into factions that compete with one another regardless of long-term consequences. What we are arguing here is that this does not apply only to human groups, but expresses a tendency of self-propagating systems in general as they develop under the influence of natural selection. Thus, the tendency is independent of any flaws of character peculiar to human beings and the tendency will persist even if humans are “cured” of their purported defects or are replaced by intelligent machines.

Let’s nevertheless assume that the most powerful self-prop subsystems of global self-prop systems will not begin to compete destructively when the external challenges to their supersystems have been removed. There is still a third reason why the kind of “world peace” described above will be unstable.

By Proposition 1, within the new “peaceful” world-system new self-prop systems will arise that, under the influence of natural selection, will evolve increasingly subtle and sophisticated ways of evading recognition—or, once they are recognized, evading suppression—by the dominant global self-prop systems. By the same process that led to the evolution of self-prop systems in the first place, new self-prop systems of greater and greater power will develop until some are powerful enough to challenge the existing global self-prop systems, whereupon destructive competition on a global scale will resume.

For the sake of clarity we have described the process in simplified form, as if a world-system relatively free of dangerous competition would *first* be established and afterward would be undone by new self-prop systems that would arise. But it’s more likely that new self-prop systems will be arising all along to challenge the existing global self-prop systems, and will prevent the hypothesized “world peace” from ever being the in the first place. In fact, we can see this happening before our eyes. The most crudely obvious of the (relatively) new self-prop systems are those that challenge law and order head on, such as terrorist networks, drug cartels, and hackers groups (e.g., Anonymous, or the now-defunct LulzSec⁶⁸). Such self-prop systems not only can disrupt the normal course of political life, as drug cartels have done in Mexico and terrorists have done in the United States; they even have the potential to take control of important nations, as drug cartels arguably have come close to doing in Kenya.⁶⁹ A subordinate system that a government creates for its own protection—its military establishment—can turn into a self-prop system in its own right and become dominant over the government, either replacing it through a military coup, or exercising effective power behind the scenes while allowing the government to retain the appearance of full sovereignty.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Kenneth Silverman (editor), *Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings*, Penguin, New York, 1986, p. 103.

⁶⁸ “An anonymous foe”, *The Economist*, June 18, 2011, pp. 67-68. Bill Saporito, “Hack Attack”, *Time*, July 4, 2011, pp. 50-52, 55. Byron Acohido, “Hacktivist group seeks ‘satisfaction’” and “LulzSec’s gone, but its effect lives on”, *USA Today*, June 20, 2011, p. 1B, and June 28, 2011, p. 1B.

⁶⁹ “A state in the thrall of drug lords”, *The Week*, January 14, 2011, p. 18.

⁷⁰ As in Pakistan, for example. See *Time*, May 23, 2011, p. 41; *The Week*, November 26, 2010, p. 15; *The Economist*, February 12, 2011, p. 48, and February 26, 2011, p. 65 (“General Ashfaq Kayani...[is] widely seen as the most powerful in [Pakistan].”).

Probably more significant at the present time are emerging self-prop systems that use entirely legal methods (new corporations are continually being formed; some grow powerful enough to challenge older corporations and gain covert political power) and those that try to keep their use of illegal methods to a minimum (as in the case of the movement that recently overthrew Hosni Mubarak in Egypt). Legal self-prop systems are especially important in those parts of the world where democracy is firmly established, because democracy gives new groups the opportunity-to compete for (and possibly win) power by legal means. Two competing, entirely legal self-prop systems that have arisen in the U.S. during the last several decades are the politically correct left and the dogmatic right (not to be confused with the liberals and conservatives of earlier times in America). This essay is not the place to speculate about the outcome of the struggle between these two forces; suffice it to say that in the long run their bitter conflict may do more to prevent the establishment of a lastingly peaceful world order than all the bombs of Al Qaeda and all the murders of the Mexican drug gangs.

Some people may imagine that it would be possible to design and construct a world-system in such a way that the foregoing processes leading to destructive competition would not occur. But there are several reasons why such a project could never be carried out in practice. Here we mention only one of the reasons: the extreme complexity that the world-system would necessarily have, and the impossibility of predicting (especially at long term) the behavior of complex systems.⁷¹

It will be objected that a mammal, (or other complex biological organism) is a self-prop system that is a composite of millions of other self-prop systems, namely, the cells of its own body. Yet (unless and until the animal cancer) no destructive competition arises among cells or groups of cells within the animal's body. Instead, all the cells loyally serve the interests of the animal as a whole. Moreover, no external threat to the animal is necessary to keep the cell faithful to their duty. There is (it will be argued) no reason why the world-system could not be as well organized as the body of a mammal, so that no destructive competition would arise among its self-prop systems.

But the body of a mammal is, a product of hundreds of millions of years of evolution through natural selection. This means that it has been-created through a trial-and-error process involving many millions of successive trials. If we suppose the duration of a generation to be a period of time Δ , those members of the first generation that contributed to the second generation by producing offspring were only those that passed the test of selection over time Δ . Those lineages⁷² that survived to the third generation were only those that passed the test of selection over time 2Δ . Those lineages that survived to the fourth generation were only those that passed the test of selection over time 3Δ . And so forth. Those lineages that survived to the n th generation were only those that passed the test of selection over the time-interval $(n-1)\Delta$ as well as the test of selection over every shorter time-interval. Though the foregoing explanation is grossly simplified, it shows

⁷¹ See *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 2003, Vol. 25, article "Physical Science, Principles of", pp. 826-827.

⁷² For the sake of simplicity we define a lineage to be any sequence of organisms $O_1, O_2, O_3, \dots, O_n$ such that O_2 is an offspring of O_1 , O_3 is an offspring of O_2 , O_4 is an offspring of O_3 , and so on down to O_n . We say that such a lineage has survived to the n th generation. But if O_n produces no offspring, then the lineage does not survive to generation $n+1$.

For example, if John is the son of Mary and George is the son of John and Laura is the daughter of George, the Mary-John-George-Laura is a lineage that survives to the fourth generation. But if Laura produces no offspring, then the lineage does not survive to the fifth generation.

that in order to have survived up to the present, a lineage of organisms has to have passed the test of selection many millions of times and over all time-intervals, short, medium, and long. To put it another way, the lineage of organisms has had to pass through a series of many millions of filters, each of which has allowed the passage only of those lineages that were “fittest” (in the Darwinian sense) to survive over time-intervals of widely varying length. It is only through this process that the body of a mammal has evolved, with its incredibly complex and subtle mechanisms that promote the survival of the animal’s lineage at short, medium, and long term. These mechanisms include those that prevent destructive competition between cells or groups of cells within the animal’s body.

But once self-prop systems have attained global scale, certain crucial differences emerge that make the selection process highly inefficient.

First, at each trial in the process of trial and error that is evolution through natural selection, there are too few individuals from among which to select the “fittest”. In a biological species there ordinarily are, at the least, several million individuals from among which the “fittest” in each generation are selected by their ability to survive and reproduce.⁷³ Self-prop systems sufficiently big and powerful to be plausible contenders for global dominance will probably number in the dozens or possibly in the hundreds; they certainly will not number in the millions.

Second, in the absence of rapid, worldwide transportation and communication, the breakdown or the destructive action of a small-scale self-prop system has only local repercussions. But, where rapid, worldwide transportation and communication have led to the emergence of global self-prop systems, the breakdown or the destructive action of anyone such system shakes the entire world-system. Consequently, in the process of trial and error that is evolution through natural selection, it is highly probable that after only a relatively small number of “trials” resulting in “errors”, the world-system will break down or be so severely disrupted that none of the world’s larger or more complex self-prop systems will be able to survive (see Proposition 3). Thus, for such self-prop systems, the trial-and-error process comes to an end; evolution through natural selection cannot continue long enough to create global self-prop systems possessing the subtle and sophisticated mechanisms that prevent destructive internal competition within complex biological organisms.

Meanwhile, fierce competition among global self-prop systems will have led to such drastic and rapid alterations in the Earth’s climate, the composition of its atmosphere, the chemistry of its oceans, and so forth, that among biological species none will be left alive except, maybe, some of the simplest organisms—certain bacteria, algae and the like that are capable of surviving under extreme conditions.⁷⁴

⁷³ Among very large animals the number of individuals in each generation may be in the thousands rather than in the millions. But biological species that consist of a relatively—small number of large individuals—such as mammoths, giant sloths, and the “megafauna” generally—have proven to be far more vulnerable to extinction than species that consist of a large number of small individuals.

⁷⁴ As explained here, we think competition between global self-propagating systems will almost certainly lead to devastation of the world if modern technology is allowed to continue its progress. But the remarkable powers that technology makes available might result in worldwide devastation independently of the existence of global self-prop systems. For example, as Bill Joy has pointed out (“Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us”, *Wired*, April 2000), it may in the future be possible to create tiny self-propagating systems (biological or not) that could reproduce themselves uncontrollably and spread over the world with devastating effect. Because the equipment needed to create such self-prop systems would be simple and inexpensive as compared with, for example, the equipment needed to produce nuclear weapons, some small group of amateurs could accidentally or intentionally create deadly self-prop systems without

The theory we've outlined here provides a plausible explanation for the so-called "Fermi Paradox". It is believed that there should be numerous planets on which technologically advanced civilizations have evolved, and which are not so remote from us that we could not by this time have detected the radio transmissions of those civilizations. The Fermi Paradox consists in the fact that our astronomers have never been able to detect any radio signals that seem to have originated from an intelligent extraterrestrial source.⁷⁵

According to Ray Kurzweil, one common explanation of the Fermi Paradox is "that a civilization may obliterate itself once it reaches radio capability. This explanation might be acceptable if we were talking about only a few such civilizations, but [if such civilizations have been numerous], it is not credible to believe that every one of them destroyed itself."⁷⁶

Kurzweil would be right if the self-destruction of a civilization were merely a matter of chance. But there is nothing implausible about the foregoing explanation of the Fermi Paradox if there is a process common to all technologically advanced civilizations that consistently leads them to self-destruction. In this essay we have argued that there is such a process.

II.

Our discussion of self-propagating systems merely describes in general and abstract terms what we see going on all around us in concrete form: Organizations, movements, ideologies are locked in an unremitting struggle for power. Those that fail to compete successfully are eliminated or subjugated.⁷⁷ The struggle is almost exclusively for power in the short term; the competitors pay scant attention even to their own long-term survival,⁷⁸ let alone to the welfare of the hu-

anyone's being aware of what they were doing until it was too late. Small groups of amateurs are already dabbling in genetic engineering. See Elizabeth Weise, "DIY 'biopunks' want science in hands of people", *USA Today*, June 1, 2011, p. 7A. These amateurs wouldn't necessarily have to create synthetic life or do anything highly sophisticated in order to bring on a disaster; merely changing a few genes in an existing organism could have catastrophic consequences. The chances of disaster in any one instance may be remote, but there are potentially thousands or millions of amateurs who could begin monkeying with the genes of microorganisms, and thousands or millions of minute risks can add up to a very substantial risk.

⁷⁵ Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near*, Penguin, New York, 2005, pp. 344-349.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 348. Kurzweil refers to an estimate that there should be "billions" of technologically advanced civilizations within the range of our observation, but he plausibly argues that the assumptions on which this estimate is based are highly uncertain and probably overoptimistic (this writer would say wildly overoptimistic). Ibid., pp. 346-47. Still, an explanation is needed for the fact that our astronomers have detected no indication of *any* extraterrestrial civilizations at *all*. See *ibid.*, p. 357. See also Michael D. Lemonick, "Is Anybody Out There? The universe may be more hospitable to life than we thought", *Time*, June 6, 2011, p. 18; "A planet in the 'Goldilocks zone'", *The Week*, June 3, 2011, p. 21. On the basis of no evidence or reasoning whatever, Kurzweil writes that "sudden [self-]destruction is likely to be only a modest factor in reducing the number of radio-capable civilizations." Ibid., p. 346. As we've argued, he's dead wrong.

⁷⁷ It is not our intention to exalt competition or to portray it as desirable. We are not making value judgments here. Our purpose is only to set forth the relevant facts, however painful those facts may be.

⁷⁸ E.g.: "As [Barbara] Tuchman put it..., 'Chief among the forces affecting political folly is lust for power...'" Diamond, *op. cit.*, p. 431. "Governments... regularly operate on a short-term focus: they... pay attention only to problems that are on the verge of explosion. For example, a friend of mine who is closely connected to the current [George W. Bush] federal administration in Washington, D.C., told me that, when he visited Washington for the first time after the 2000 national elections he found that our government's new leaders had what he termed a '90-day focus': they talked only about those problems with the potential to cause a disaster within the next 90 days." Ibid., p. 434. Diamond is wasting his time in preaching against these tendencies because these tendencies are inevitable products of natural selection operating upon self-prop systems under present-day conditions.

man race or of the biosphere. That's why nuclear weapons have not been banned, emissions of carbon dioxide have not been reduced to a safe level, the Earth's resources are being exploited at an utterly reckless rate, and no limitation has been placed on development of powerful but dangerous technologies.

The purpose of describing the process in general and abstract terms, as we've done here, is to show that what is happening to our world is not accidental; it is not the result of some chance conjunction of historical circumstances or of some flaw of character peculiar to human beings. Given the nature of self-propagating systems in general, the destructive process that we see today is made inevitable by a combination of two factors: the colossal power of modern technology and the availability of rapid transportation and communication between any two parts of the world.

Recognition of this may help us to avoid wasting time on naïve efforts to solve our current problems. For example, on efforts to teach people to conserve energy and resources. Such efforts accomplish nothing whatever.

It seems amazing that those who advocate energy conservation haven't noticed what happens: As soon as some energy is freed up by conservation, the technological world-system gobbles it up and demands more. No matter how much energy is provided, the system always expands rapidly until it is using all available energy, and then it demands still more. The same is true of other resources. The technological world-system infallibly expands until it reaches a limit imposed by an insufficiency of resources, and then it tries to push beyond that limit regardless of consequences.

This is explained by the theory of self-propagating systems: Those organizations (or other self-prop systems) that least allow respect for the environment to interfere with their pursuit of power here and now, tend to acquire more power than those that limit their pursuit of power from concern about what will happen to our environment fifty years from now, or even ten years (Proposition 2). Thus, through a process of natural selection, the world comes to be dominated by organizations that make maximum possible use of all available resources to augment their own power without regard to long-term consequences.

Environmental do-gooders may answer that if the public has been persuaded to take environmental concerns seriously it will be disadvantageous in terms of natural selection for an organization to abuse the environment, because citizens can offer resistance to environmentally reckless organizations. For example, people might refuse to buy products manufactured by companies that are environmentally destructive. However, human behavior and human attitudes can be manipulated. Environmental damage can be shielded, up to a point, from public scrutiny; with the help of public-relations firms, a corporation can persuade people that it is environmentally responsible; advertising and marketing techniques can give people such an itch to possess a corporation's products that few individuals will refuse to buy them from concern for the environment; computer games, electronic social networking, and other mechanisms of escape keep people absorbed in hedonistic pursuits so that they don't have time for environmental worries. More importantly, people are made to see themselves as utterly dependent on the products and services provided by the corporations. Because people have to earn money to buy the products and services on which they are dependent, they need jobs. Economic growth is necessary for the creation of jobs, therefore people accept environmental damage when it is portrayed as a price that must be paid for economic growth. Nationalism too is brought into play both by corporations and by governments. Citizens are made to feel that outside forces are threatening: "The

Chinese will get ahead of us if we don't increase our rate of economic growth. Al Qaeda will blow us up if we don't improve our technology and our weaponry fast enough."

These are some of the tools that organizations use to counter environmentalists' efforts to arouse public concern; similar tools can help to blunt other forms of resistance to the organizations' pursuit of power. The organizations that are most successful in blunting public resistance to their pursuit of power tend to increase their power more rapidly than organizations that are less successful in blunting public resistance to their power-seeking activities, whatever the degree of environmental damage involved. Because such organizations have great wealth at their disposal, environmentalists do not have the resources to compete with them in the propaganda war.

This is the reason, or an important part of the reason, why attempts to teach people to be environmentally responsible have done so little to slow the destruction of our environment. And again—note well—the process we've described is not contingent on any accidental set of circumstances or on any defect in human character. Given the availability of advanced technology, the process of inevitability accompanies the action of natural selection upon self-propagating systems.

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This text was transcribed by Freedom Club, an anti-industrial student group at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Communiques of Freedom Club

Ted Kaczynski

About Freedom Club

Freedom Club (FC) was an anarchist terror group that engaged in a bombing campaign on scientists and technologists between the 1970s and 1990s to spread an anti-industrial message. They promised to stop the bombings if a national newspaper would widely publish their manuscript against industrial society, “Industrial Society and Its Future,” also known as “The Unabomber Manifesto.”

After the Washington Post and the New York Times published the manuscript, David Kaczynski contacted the FBI to suggest that FC might be his brother, Theodore Kaczynski. When the FBI raided Ted Kaczynski’s house, they found all the evidence needed to link him to the bombings and convict him as the Unabomber. Ted, now known by anarchists, environmentalists, and other supporters as “Uncle Ted,” now resides in a high security prison in Colorado, where he regularly publishes writings, many of which were included in *Technological Slavery*.

The following letters are from FBI files for documents found in Ted Kaczynski’s cabin. All of the documents are copies of letters that were actually sent during the bombing campaign (except Unsent letter to LWOD). The original files reside in the University of Michigan’s Special Collections Library (Labadie Collection), from which these letters were requested for transcription and dissemination.

Note: Words in [brackets] are editorial notes about the original documents.

Letter to San Francisco Examiner (1985)

[Handwritten:] Mailed to the San Francisco Examiner in December, 1985

[Typed:]

TO THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

The bomb that crippled the right arm of a graduate student in electrical engineering and damaged a computer lab at U. of Cal. Berkeley last May was planted by a terrorist group called Freedom Club. We are also responsible for some earlier bombing attempts; among others, the bomb that injured a professor in the computer science building at U. of Cal., the mail bomb that injured the secretary of computer expert Patrick Fischer at Vanderbilt University 3 ½ years ago, and the fire bomb planted at the Business School at the U. of Utah, which never went off. We have nothing against academics as such. We could have attacked businessmen or scientists working for private corporations. But academics are easy targets because anyone can walk into college buildings without being questioned, and academics are less likely to be suspicious of a package received in the mail than someone in the business world would be.

We have waited until now to announce ourselves because our earlier bombs were embarrassingly ineffectual. The injuries they inflicted were relatively minor. In order to influence people, a terrorist group must show a certain amount of success. When we finally realized that the amount of smokeless powder needed to blow up anyone or anything was too large to be practical, we decided to take a couple of years off to learn something about explosive and develop an effective bomb.

First, we had to learn some basic physics, chemistry and mathematics, since none of us had any scientific background to start with. Then we had to go through some time-consuming experiments. That we now have an effective bomb is shown by what we did to that electrical engineer’s

arm with less than two ounces of explosive. He would have been killed if he had been standing so as to take the fragments in the body instead of the arm. You can imagine what we will be able to do when we have worked out ways to use this explosive in larger quantities, say ten, twenty five or fifty pounds. We hope those computer freaks over at the university like fireworks, cause they are going to see some good ones.

To prove that we are the ones who planted the bomb at U. of Cal. last May, we will mention a few details that could be known only to us and the FBI men who investigated the incident. The explosive was contained in an iron pipe of nominal $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (actually about $\frac{13}{16}$ inch) inside diameter. The ends of the pipe were closed with iron plugs secured with iron pins, of $\frac{5}{16}$ inch diameter. One of the plugs had the letters FC (for Freedom Club) marked on it. (There was a metal disc attached to the plug to help assure a good seal. If this was not blown off it would be necessary to remove it in order to see the letters FC.) The bomb was ignited by electricity passing through a fine steel filament. The load-wires passing through the plug to the filament were 18 gauge with green insulation. The rest of the wiring was 16 gauge with flesh covered insulation. Six Duracell size D batteries were used. This should be enough to prove that we planted the bomb.

We enclose a brief statement partly explaining our aims. We hereby give the San Francisco Examiner permission to print in full any and all of the material contained in this envelope. We give ANYONE permission to print it. We want the material to be in the public domain so that anyone can print it. [Handwritten: Here should read "We don't know if"] this note is legally adequate [sic] to put our statement in the public domain, especially since we are not going to sign our names [crossed out: to this letter], but you can be sure we are not going to sue anyone for infringement of copyright for printing this material, so you might as well go ahead and print it.

– THE FREEDOM CLUB

[Page 2:]

1. The aim of the Freedom Club is the complete and permanent destruction of modern industrial society in every part of the world. This means no more airplanes, no more radios, no more miracle drugs, no more paved roads, and so forth. Today a large and growing number of people are coming to recognize the industrial-technological system as the greatest enemy of freedom. Many evidences of these changing attitudes could be cited. For the moment we content ourselves with mentioning one statistic. "According to a January 1980 poll, only 33 percent of the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany [West Germany] still believe that technological development will lead to greater freedom; 56 percent think it is more likely to make us less free." This is from "1984: Decade of the Experts?" – an article by Johanno Strasser in 1934 revisited: Totalitarianism in our century, edited by Irving Howe and published by Harper and Row, 1983. (This article as a whole helps to show the extent to which technology is becoming a target of social rebellion.)

2. The hollowness of the old revolutionary ideologies centering on socialism has become clear. Now and in the future the thrust of rebellion will be against the industrial-technological system itself and not for or against any political ideology that is supposed to govern the administration of that system. All ideologies and political systems are fakes. They only result in power for special groups who just push the rest of us around. There is only one way to escape from being pushed around, and that is to smash the whole system and get along without it. It is better to be poor and free than to be a slave and get pushed around all your life.

3. No ideology or political system can get around the hard facts of life in industrial society. Because any form of industrial society requires a high level of organization, all decisions have to

be made by a small elite of leaders and experts who necessarily wield all the power, regardless of any political fictions that may be maintained. Even if the motives of this elite were completely unselfish, they would still HAVE TO exploit and manipulate us simply to keep the system running. Thus the evil is in the nature of technology itself.

4. Man is a social animal, meant to live in groups. But only in SMALL groups, say up to 100 people, in which all members know one another intimately. Man is not meant to live as an insignificant atom in a vast organization, which is the only way he can live in any form of industrialized society.

5. The Freedom Club is strictly anti-communist, anti-socialist, anti-leftist. One reason for this is that the left has a consistent record of unintentionally (when not intentionally) subverting rebel movements of any kind and turning them into leftist movements. Until now, leftism has had an image as THE ideology of rebellion, so that many persons who join any rebel movement are likely to be left-leaning. When enough leftists have joined such a movement it acquires a leftist aroma which attracts still more leftists until the movement becomes just another socialist sect. Therefore the Freedom Club must completely disassociate itself from any form of leftism. This does not imply that we are in any sense a right-wing movement. We are apolitical. Politics only distracts attention from the real issue.

6. Don't think that we are sadists or thrill-seekers or that we have adopted terrorism lightly. Though we are young we are not hot-heads. We have become terrorists only after the most earnest consideration.

The foregoing statement gives only a very incomplete indication of our goals and motives. We will explain ourselves more fully in later communications.

Material Sent to LWOD

Letter to LWOD

To LWOD [Live Wild or Die]: This is a message from FC Anarchist Terror Group. We are the people who have been blowing up computer scientists, biotech specialists, public relations experts and so forth. The FBI calls us "Unabom." About the time you receive this letter you should hear through the media about another bombing, if everything works OK. Notice that this letter was postmarked either before or about the same time as the bombing hit the news, which proves that the letter is authentic. As a means of proving the authenticity of any further communications we may send to you, we give you an identifying number: 14962. Keep this number secret, so that when you receive a letter bearing it you will know that the letter comes from us. This is different from the identifying number that we gave to the New York Times.

We have a manuscript of between 29,000 and 37,000 words that we want to have published. We are writing to the New York Times to try to make a deal over it. We are telling the Times that if they will publish the manuscript serialized in their newspaper, or [crossed out] if they can get it published in book form, we will agree to stop blowing up scientists and corporate execs. For the moment we are more interested in propagating anti-industrial ideas than in killing another exec or biotech nerd.

However, we may find it useful to blow up more biotechnicians and the like at some time in the future, so we would prefer not to be bound by a promise to stop bombing. If we made such a promise we wouldn't want to break it. So we are looking for some way to get our material published without having to make any promises or deals.

Would LWOD be willing to publish our manuscript in serial form? Or, better, could you get it published in book form and widely distributed to the general public? If you published it in serial form, how long would it take you to publish the whole thing? If you could get it published in book form, how widely would you distribute it and how long would it take you to get it published once we have sent you the manuscript? You'd be welcome to keep any profit you might make on the book and use it to propagate anti-industrial ideas.

The manuscript contains: (1) an analysis of what is wrong with the industrial system; (2) a demonstration that the industrial system cannot be successfully reformed but must be destroyed; (2) appropriate strategy for revolutionaries seeking to destroy the industrial system.

Please give us your answer by placing a classified ad in the San Francisco [crossed out] Chronicle, preferably on May 1, 1995. The ad should begin with the words "Personal to MCHVP." We ask you to answer in SF Chronicle instead of LWOD because we know of only one place where we can get to LWOD, and if the FBI gets hold of this letter they will be able to watch the few places where it is possible to get LWOD and maybe catch us that way.

We enclose a copy of our letter to the NY Times.

Place the ad in the classification #420, "Personals." To place ad contact

San Francisco Newspaper Agency

Classified Dept.

925 Mission Street

San Francisco, CA 94103

toll free phone (800) 227-4423

Best Regards,

FC

Confidential note to LWOD

CONFIDENTIAL NOTE

Enclosed is a letter that presumably will require general discussion by the LWOD staff. But this confidential note contains material that should be known to as few people as possible. So whichever LWOD person opens this envelope, he or she should hide this note and reveal its existence to no one, except when absolutely necessary. Read the other material in this envelope before reading the rest of this confidential[crossed out] note.

The material in this envelope constitutes evidence in a felony case, so LWOD might get in trouble if it doesn't [crossed out] turn this stuff over to the FBI. It is always possible that your group may contain an FBI infiltrator who will report our letter to his bosses. And if you do publish our manuscript the FBI will know about it. So LWOD may want to give these documents to the FBI (except this confidential note, which can safely be kept secret).

This creates a possible problem, because the FBI will be able to confuse you or us by sending LWOD a fake manuscript or placing a fake ad in the SF Chronicle or some such COINTELPRO trick. Or the FBI may ask the Chronicle not to print your ad on the grounds that it would con-

tribute to “criminal” activity. To get around that, we should have some completely confidential way of communicating. This can be established as follows.

Place an ad in the classified section of the Los Angeles Times, classification #1660, “Personal messages.” The ad should preferably appear on May 9, 1995, but in any case leave a few days between the time when the Chronicle ad appears and the time when the LA Times ad appears. This ad should begin, “Dear Stargazer, the mystic numbers that control your fate are ...” and it should be signed “Numerologist.” In between there will be a sequences of numbers conveying a coded message.

The code works this way. It will be random number code and therefore unbreakable. Use the series of random numbers that we have given on another sheet. Begin by encoding your message according to the following system: For A put 1, for B put 2, for C [crossed out] put 3, etc. up to 26 for Z. For space between two words put 27, for period put 28, for comma put 29, for question mark put 30. When you have your message coded by this system you will have a series of numbers that we can call the **basic sequence**. You then change the basic sequence by adding to it the numbers of the random sequence. To the first number of the basic sequence add the first number of the random sequence, to the second number of the basic sequence add the second number of the random sequence and so forth. Whenever the sum is greater than 30, subtract 30 from it. The resulting sequence of numbers is what you publish in the LA Times. See example on other sheet.

In your coded ad please give us an address to which we can send you messages with assurance that they will be [crossed out] completely safe and confidential. (We won’t send you any uncoded message that could get you in trouble if it got into the wrong hands.) Also please tell us in your coded ad whether your open ad in SF Chronicle is authentic and can be taken at face value.

Your coded ad probably won’t use up all the numbers of the random sequence. Have the rest of the sequence in case we want it for future use. NEVER USE ANY PART OF THE RANDOM SEQUENCE TWICE. To do so would enable the FBI to decode the message.

We give a separate, confidential identifying number for verification of any messages we may send you: 82771

Legally the FBI can’t open first class mail without a warrant, but there’s always a chance they might have opened the present envelope anyway, so this system of passing confidential messages isn’t 100% secure.

FC

(OVER)

[Handwritten:] Los Angeles Times Classified Ads Phone Numbers

(213) 629-4411

(800) 234-4444

Address of Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

Times Mirror Square

Los Angeles, CA 90052

Copy of letter sent to New York Times

Copy of letter sent to New York Times. You can print it in LWOD if you like.

[See Letter to Warren Hoge of the New York Times (1995).]

CODING EXAMPLE

message	I	N	D	U	S	T	R	I	A	L
basic sequence	9, 14, 4,	21, 19,	20, 18,	9, 1,	12, 27,					
random sequence	5, 30, 27,	1, 15,	4, 7,	22, 13,	28, 9,					
sum	14, 44, 31,	22, 34,	24, 25,	31, 14,	40, 36,					
fully coded	14, -30, -30,	-30,	-30,	-30,	-30,					
message	14, 14, 1,	22, 4,	24, 25,	1, 14,	10, 6,					

message	S	O	C	I	E	T	Y	S	T	I	N	K	S
basic sequence	19, 15, 3,	9, 5,	20, 25,	27, 19,	20, 9,	14, 11,	19,						
random sequence	26, 25, 11,	11, 30,	2, 14,	23, 14,	12, 29,	6, 25,	4,						
sum	45, 40, 14,	20, 35,	22, 39,	50, 33,	32, 38,	20, 36,	23,						
fully coded	-30, -30,	-30,	-30,	-30,	-30,	-30,	-30,						
message	15, 10, 14,	20, 5,	22, 9,	20, 3,	2, 8,	20, 6,	23,						

RANDOM SEQUENCE- READ LEFT TO RIGHT

5, 30, 27, 1, 15, 4, 7, 22, 13, 28, 9, 26, 25, 11, 11, 30, 2, 14, 23, 14, 12, 29, 6, 25, 4, 8, 19, 26, 8, 27, 3, 21, 21, 16, 5, 18, 6, 9, 26, 27, 24, 27, 9, 24, 8, 17, 7, 1, 22, 8, 22, 19, 1, 13, 3, 10, 24, 10, 1, 1, 7, 8, 9, 3, 1, 19, 14, 6, 19, 7, 14, 24, 18, 14, 7, 17, 9, 7, 3, 20, 5, 1, 14, 24, 29, 28, 4, 3, 8, 7, 5, 13, 22, 3, 19, 7, 14, 29, 6, 18, 5, 18, 2, 30, 11, 1, 4, 3, 19, 1, 8, 9, 1, 10, 20, 15, 19, 15, 30, 30, 26, 28, 5, 9, 17, 28, 11, 12, 7, 7, 1, 17, 5, 27, 22, 15, 9, 30, 16, 13, 13, 8, 16, 10, 8, 25, 6, 11, 15, 13, 21, 15, 16, 8, 20, 5, 11, 24, 29, 22, 18, 14, 23, 10, 6, 24, 12, 6, 6, 10, 25, 1, 5, 4, 11, 17, 11, 22, 10, 21, 28, 16, 20, 17, 21, 12, 8, 28, 19, 14, 20, 17, 22, 13, 23, 15, 15, 20, 4, 7, 18, 11, 23, 4, 11, 12, 16, 4, 16, 18, 21, 3, 18, 4, 12, 18, 24, 22, 8, 12, 10, 20, 21, 14, 2, 11, 29, 3, 9, 9, 23, 11, 1, 19, 26, 27, 5, 21, 26, 24, 7, 15, 7, 15, 4, 13, 10, 23, 10, 8, 30, 24, 22, 9, 5, 2, 12, 20, 24, 10, 5, 2, 23, 27, 18, 15, 2, 9, 9, 30, 10, 28, 28, 3, 21, 5, 20, 30, 27, 9, 25, 6, 24, 16, 2, 24, 23, 3, 26, 17, 22, 1.

Example of the code described in the Confidential Note to LWOD.

Letter to Warren Hoge of the New York Times (1995)

1.

This is a message from the terrorist group FC. To prove its [sic.] authentic we give our identifying number (to be kept secret): 553-25-4394.

We blew up Thomas Mosser last December because he was a Burston-Marsteller executive. Among other misdeeds, Burston-Marsteller [sic.] helped Exxon clean up its public image after the Exxon Valdes incident. But we attacked Burston-Marsteller less for its specific misdeed than on general principles. Burston-Marsteller is about the biggest organization in the public relations field. This means that its business is the development of techniques for manipulating people's attitudes. It was for this more than for its actions in specific cases that we sent a bomb to an executive of this company.

Some news reports have made the misleading statement that we have been attacking universities or scholars. We have nothing against universities or scholars as such. All the university people whom we have attacked have been specialists in **technical fields**. (We consider certain areas of applied psychology, such as behavior modification, to be technical fields.) We would not want anyone to think that we have any desire to hurt professors who study archaeology, history, literature or harmless stuff like that. The people we are out to get are the scientists and engineers, especially in critical fields like computers and genetics. As for the bomb planted in the [crossed out] Business School at the U. of Utah, that was a botched operation. We won't say how or why it was botched because we don't want to give the FBI any clues. No one was hurt by that bomb.

In our previous letter to you we called ourselves anarchists. Since “anarchist” is a vague word that has been applied to a variety of attitudes, further explanation is needed. We call ourselves anarchists because we would like, ideally, to break down all society into very small, completely autonomous units. Regrettably, we don’t see any clear road to this goal, so we leave it to the indefinite future. Our more immediate goal, which we think may be attainable at some time during the next several decades, is the destruction of the worldwide industrial system. Through our bombings we hope to promote social instability in industrial society, propagate anti-industrial ideas and give encouragement to those who hate the industrial system.

The FBI has tried to portray these bombings as the work of an isolated nut. We won’t waste our time arguing about whether we are nuts, but we certainly are not isolated. For security reasons we won’t reveal the number of members of our group, but anyone who will read the anarchist and radical environmentalist journals will see that opposition to the industrial-technological system is widespread and growing.

Why do we announce our [crossed out] goals only now, through we made our first bomb some seventeen years ago? Our early bombs were too ineffectual to attract much public attention or give encouragement to those who hate the system. We found by experience that gunpowder bombs, if small enough to be carried inconspicuously, were too feeble to do much damage, so we took a couple of years off to do some experimenting. We learned how to make pipe bombs that were powerful enough, and we used these in a couple of successful bombings as well as in some unsuccessful ones. Unfortunately we discovered that these bombs would not detonate **consistently** when made with three-quarter inch steel water pipe. They did seem to detonate consistently when made with massively reinforced one inch steel water pipe, but a bomb of this type made a long, heavy package, too conspicuous and suspicious looking for our liking.

So we went back to work, and after a long period of experimentation we developed a type of bomb that does not require a pipe, but is set off by a detonating cap that consists of chlorate explosive packed into a piece of small diameter copper tubing. (The detonating cap is a miniature pipe bomb.) We used bombs of this type to blow up the genetic engineer Charles Epstein and the computer specialist David Gelernter. We did use a chlorate pipe bomb to blow up Thomas Mosser because we happened to have a piece of light-weight aluminum pipe that was just right for the job. The Gelernter and Epstein bombings were not fatal, but the Mosser bombing was fatal even though a smaller amount of explosive was used. We think this was because the type of fragmentation material that we used in the Mosser bombing is more effective [crossed out] than what we’ve used previously.

Since we no longer have to confine the explosive in a pipe, we are now free of limitations on the size and shape of our bombs. We are pretty sure we know how to increase the power of our explosives and reduce the number of batteries needed to set them off. And, as we’ve just indicated, we think we now have more effective fragmentation material. So we expect to be able to pack deadly bombs into ever smaller, lighter and more harmless looking packages. On the other hand, we believe we will be able to make bombs much bigger than any we’ve made before. With a briefcase-full or a suitcase-full of explosives we should be able to blow out the walls of substantial buildings.

Clearly we are in a position to do a great deal of damage. And it doesn’t appear that the FBI is going to catch us any time soon. The FBI is a joke.

The people who are pushing all this growth and progress garbage deserve to be severely punished. But our goal is less to punish them than to propagate ideas. Anyhow we are getting tired

of making bombs. It's no fun having to spend all your evenings and weekends preparing dangerous mixtures, filing trigger mechanisms out of scraps of metal or searching the sierras for a place isolated enough to test a bomb. So we offer a bargain.

We have a long article, between 29,000 and 37,000 words, that we want to have published. If you can get it published according to our requirements we will permanently desist from terrorist activities. It must be published in the New York Times, Time or Newsweek, or in some other widely read, nationally distributed periodical. Because of its length we suppose it will have to be serialized. Alternatively, it can be published as a small book, but the book must be well publicized and made available at a moderate price in bookstores nationwide and in at least some places abroad. Whoever agrees to publish the material will have exclusive rights to reproduce it for a period of six months and will be welcome to any profits they may make from it. After six months from the first appearance of the article or book it must become public property, so that anyone can reproduce or publish it. (If material is serialized, first instalment becomes public property six months after appearance of first instalment, second instalment, etc.) We must have the right to publish in the New York Times, Time or Newsweek, each year for three years after the appearance of our article or book, three thousand words expanding or clarifying our material or rebutting criticisms of it.

The article will [crossed out] not explicitly advocate violence. There will be an unavoidable implication that we favor violence to the extent that it may be necessary, since we advocate eliminating industrial society and we ourselves have been using violence to that end. But the article will not advocate violence explicitly, nor will it propose the overthrow of the United States Government, nor will it contain obscenity or anything else that you would be likely to regard as unacceptable for publication.

How do you know that we will keep our promise to desist from terrorism if our conditions are met? It will be to our [crossed out] advantage to keep our promise. We want to win acceptance for certain ideas. If we break our promise people will lose respect for us and so will be less likely to accept the ideas.

Our offer to desist from terrorism is subject to three qualifications. First: Our promise to desist will not take effect until all parts of our article or book have appeared in print. Second: If the authorities should succeed in tracking us down and an attempt is made to arrest any of us, or even to question us in connection with the bombings, we reserve the right to use violence. Third: We distinguish between terrorism and sabotage. By terrorism we mean actions motivated by a desire to influence the development of a society and intended to cause injury or death to human beings. By sabotage we mean similarly motivated actions intended to destroy property without injuring human beings. The promise we offer is to desist from terrorism. We reserve the right to engage in sabotage.

It may be just as well that failure of our early bombs discouraged us from making any public statements at that time. We were very young then and our thinking was crude. Over the years we have given as much attention to the development of our ideas as to the development of bombs, and we now have something serious to say. And we feel that just now the time is ripe for the presentation of anti-industrial ideas.

Please see to it that the answer to our offer is well publicized in the media so that we won't miss it. Be sure to tell us where and how our material will be published and how long it will take to appear in print once we have sent in the manuscript. If the answer is satisfactory, we

will finish typing the manuscript and send it to you. If the answer is unsatisfactory, we will start building our next bomb.

We encourage you to print this letter.

FC

P.S. Mr. Hoge, at this time we are sending letters to David Gelernter, Richard J. Roberts and Phillip A. Sharp, the last two being recent Nobel Prize winners. We are not putting our identifying number on these letters, because we want to keep it secret. Instead, we are advising Gelernter, Roberts and Sharp to [crossed out] contact you for confirmation that the letters do come from FC.

Letter to Warren Hoge (1993)

We are an anarchist group calling ourselves FC. Notice that the postmark on this envelope precedes a newsworthy event that will happen about the time you receive this letter, if [crossed out] nothing goes wrong. This will prove that we knew about the event in advance, so our claim of responsibility is truthful. Ask the FBI about FC. They have heard of us. We will give information about our goals at some future time. Right now we only want to establish our identity and provide an identifying number that will ensure the authenticity of any future communications from us. Keep this number secret so that no one else can pretend to speak in our name.

553-25-4394

[Handwritten:] This is a copy of letter [crossed out] sent to this address:

[Unreadable] to Warren Hoge

Assistant Managing Editor

New York Times

221 West 43rd Street

New York, NY 10036

Letter to Scientific American

1.

We write in reference to a piece by Russel Ruthen, "Strange Matters: Can Advanced Accelerators Initiate Runaway Reactions?" Science and the Citizen, Scientific American, August, 1993.

It seems that physicists have long kept behind closed doors their concern that experiments with particle accelerators might lead to a world-swallowing catastrophe. This is a good example of the arrogance of scientists, who routinely take risks affecting the public. The public commonly is not aware that risks are being taken, and often the scientists do not even admit to themselves that there are risks. Most scientists have a deep emotional commitment to their work and are not in a position to be objective about its negative aspects.

We are not so much concerned about the danger of experiments with accelerated particles. Since the physicists are not fools, we assume that the risk is small (though probably not as small as the physicists claim). But scientists [crossed out] and engineers constantly gamble with human welfare, and we see today the effects of some of their lost gambles: ozone depletion, the greenhouse effect, cancer-causing chemicals to which we cannot avoid exposure, accumulating nuclear waste for which a sure method of disposal has not yet been found, the crowding, noise

and pollution that have followed industrialization, massive extinction of species and so forth. For the future, what will be the consequences of genetic engineering? Of the development of super-intelligent computers (if this [unreadable])? Of understanding of the human brain and the resulting inevitable temptation to “improve” it? No one knows.

We emphasize that negative PHYSICAL consequences of scientific advances often are completely unforeseeable. (It probably never occurred to the chemists who developed early pesticides that they might be causing many cases of disease in humans.) But far more difficult to foresee are the negative SOCIAL consequences of technological progress. The engineers who began the industrial revolution never dreamed that their work would result in the creation of an industrial proletariat or the economic boom and bust cycle. The wiser ones may have guessed that contact with industrial society would disrupt other cultures around the world, but they probably never imagined the extent of the damage that these other cultures would suffer. Nor did it occur to them that in the West itself technological progress would lead to a society tormented by a variety of social and psychological problems.

EVERY MAJOR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE IS ALSO A SOCIAL EXPERIMENT. These experiments are performed on the public by the scientists and by the corporations and government agencies that pay for their research. The elite groups get fulfilment [sic.], the exhilaration, the sense of power involved in bringing about technological progress while the average man gets only the consequences of their social experiments. It could be argued that in a purely physical sense the consequences are positive, since life-expectancy has increased. But the acceptability of risks cannot be assessed in purely actuarial terms. “(P)eople also rank risks based on ... how equitably the danger is distributed, how well individuals can control their exposure and whether risk is assumed voluntarily.” (M. Granger Morgan, “Risk Analysis and Management.” *Scientific American*, July, 1993, page 35.) The elite groups who create technological progress share in control of the process and assume the risks voluntarily, whereas the role of the average individual is necessarily passive and involuntary. Moreover, it is possible that at some time in the future the population explosion, environmental disaster or the breakdown of an increasingly troubled society may lead to a sudden drastic lowering of life expectancy.

However it may be with the PHYSICAL risks, there are good reasons to consider the SOCIAL consequences of technological progress as highly negative. This matter is discussed at length in a manuscript that we are sending to the *New York Times*.

The engineers who initiated the industrial revolution can be forgiven for not having anticipated its negative consequences. But the harm caused by technological progress is by this time sufficiently apparent so that to continue to promote it is [crossed out] grossly irresponsible.

This letter, which we invite you to print in *Scientific American*, is from the terrorist group FC. To prove that this letter does come from FC, we quote below the entire fourth paragraph of a letter that we are sending to the *New York Times*. The authenticity of the letter to the *Times* is confirmed by means of our secret identifying number.

FOURTH PARAGRAPH OF LETTER TO NY TIMES:

Contrary to what the FBI has suggested, our bombing at the California Forestry Association was in no way inspired by the Oklahoma City bombing. We strongly deplore the kind of indiscriminate slaughter that occurred in the Oklahoma City event. We have no regret about the fact

that our bomb blew up the “wrong” man, Gilbert Murray, instead of William N. Dennison, to whom it was addressed. Though Murray did not have Dennison’s inflammatory style he was pursuing the same goals, and he was probably pursuing them more effectively because of the very fact that he was not inflammatory.

Letter to Richard J. Roberts

Dr. Roberts: It would be beneficial to your health to stop your research in genetics. This is a warning from FC.

Warren Hoge of the New York Times can confirm that this note does come from FC.

Letter to Phillip A. Sharp

Dr. Sharp: It would be beneficial to your health to stop your research in genetics. This is a warning from FC.

Warren Hoge of the New York Times can confirm that this note does come from FC.

Unsent letter to LWOD

LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF LWOD. We urge you to print this in LWOD.

Many of the people who want to destroy the industrial form of society are concerned about the population problem and therefore refrain from having children. We believe this is a serious mistake. Scientific studies have shown that social attitudes tend to be inherited. No one suggests that a person’s social attitudes are directly determined by his or her genetic constitution, but there is good reason to believe that children inherit personality traits that make them likely, in the context of the present society, to develop one or another set of social attitudes. Some scientists question this conclusion, but their arguments are rather flimsy and are ideologically motivated. Anyway, if social attitudes are not inherited then they are passed on through childhood training, because it is certain that a person’s attitudes tend, on the average, to resemble those of his parents; allowing of course for frequent individual exceptions and for changes in the social situation that occur between one generation and another. Unlike us, earlier generations of rebels tended to attack particular social evils rather than industrial society as a whole, because in their day it had not yet become evident that evil was inherent in industrialism itself. But the general tendency to a rebellious attitude toward modern society is commonly passed from parents to children, whether genetically or through training.

By refraining from having children, rebels against the industrial system may be handing the world over to the growths. (“Growth” is our word for anyone who favors economic growth and all that crap.) Because the growths have as many children as they like, while many radicals refrain from having children from concern over the population problem, there is danger that with each successive generation the proportion of growths in the population will increase and the proportion of rebels will decrease.

We too are disgusted at the present grossly overpopulated state of the world and we agree that it is necessary to reduce the earth’s population as much as possible. But the best way to reach a goal is not always to head directly toward it.

What the earth's population will be 50 or 100 years from now depends mainly on the form of society that will then exist. The present economically oriented form of society, based on industrialism, tends inexorably to grow to the limit of the available resources. By creating new genetically altered plants, or maybe through some type of artificial photosynthesis, this form of society will greatly increase the world's food producing capacity and will allow or encourage its population to grow to the limit of that capacity. Or, even if the population does not grow to the limit, the demands of the ever expanding industrial system will stress the earth's resources to the maximum. So if the present form of society survives, the world that it creates will be a horrible one.

Therefore the important goal is to destroy the present form of society and its industrial base.

If anti-industrial rebels give a reproductive advantage to the growths by refraining from having children, they will be slowing present population growth only slightly and they will be increasing the likelihood that the growths will win out, that the present form of society will survive and that the world of the future will be a horror.

If rebels have as many children as they can, they will be accelerating present population growth only slightly and they will be increasing the number of anti-industrial rebels, hence the probability that the present form of society can be eliminated, and consequently the likelihood that the world's population can be greatly reduced in the future.

So it would be best for those who hate industrialism to outbreed the growths until the present form of society has been done away with.

FC Anarchist Terror Group

Letter to James V. McConnell

[Handwritten:] Carta enviada con el paquete [...] exp. 100. La carta estaba en un sobre prendido con cinta al paquete. El sobre [...] [See translation below]

[Typed:] Department of History

University of Utah

Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

November 12, 1985

Dr. James V. McConnell

2900 E. Delhi Road

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

Dear Dr. McConnell:

I am a doctoral candidate in History at the University of Utah. My field of interest is the history of science, and I am writing my dissertation on the development of the behavioral sciences during the twentieth century.

This dissertation aspires to be more than a mere collection of facts. In it I am attempting to analyse the factors in society at large that tend to promote vigorous development in a given area of science, and especially I am attempting to shed light on the way in which progress in a particular field of research influences the public attitudes toward the field in such a manner as to further accelerate its development, as through research grants, increased interest on the part of the students, and because I believe that they illustrate particularly well my hypotheses concerning the interaction of science and society.

I have now prepared an initial version of the dissertation, but expect to revise it heavily before putting it into final form. Before completing the revisions, I am asking several distinguished researchers in behavioral sciences for their comments on the paper. It is for this purpose that I am sending you herewith a copy of my dissertation on its preliminary form.

Since this dissertation is very long and detailed, I realize that you may not have time to read it in its entirety, but I would appreciate it very much if you could at least look over Chapters 11 and 12, the chapters most closely related to your own field of research, and give me your comments and any corrections you may have. Particularly I would like to know your reaction to the idea outlined in the last three paragraphs of Chapter 12. Of course, any comments that you might care to make on any other part of the dissertation would also be most welcome.

I thank you in advance for your kind assistance.

Very truly yours,

Ralph C. Kloppenburg

[Handwritten:] Letter mailed with package of exp. 100. The letter was in an envelope attached to the package with tape. The envelope had the address, but no [crossed out] postage. The package itself had enough postage for the package and the letter.

Letter to Earth First! Journal

Earth First!:

This is a message from FC. The FBI calls us "unabom." We are the people who recently assassinated the president of the California Forestry Association. We know that most radical environmentalists are non-violent and strongly disapprove of our bombings. But we have some things to say that should be of special interest to radical environmentalists. Even if you disagree with our conclusions you can hardly deny that the issues we raise are important ones that radical environmentalists should think about and discuss.

We are enclosing a copy of a manuscript that we are sending to the New York Times, also a copy of the letter that we are sending to the Times with the manuscript. We have reason to hope that the NY Times will either publish the manuscript or arrange for its publication elsewhere. However, if neither the NY Times nor any other major periodical has published the manuscript, or begun to publish it in serialized form, or had it published elsewhere, or announced a definite date for its publication, within 5 months of the day this letter is postmarked, then the Earth First! Journal can publish the manuscript. You can publish it either serialized or in the form of a small book, and you will be welcome to [crossed out] keep any profit you may make from it. Contact NY Times for information concerning what is being done about publication of the manuscript.

We offered the NY Times a promise to desist from terrorism in exchange for publication of our manuscript in a widely read, nationally distributed periodical. Earth First! does not qualify as widely read, so we offer no such promise in [crossed out] exchange for publication in Earth First! However, if Earth First! is willing and able to get the manuscript published in book form, and if the book is [crossed out] distributed nationally and well publicized, then we will abide by the promise to desist from terrorism. Contact the NY Times [crossed out] for information concerning conditions that we laid down in our letters to that newspaper.

Whoever may first publish the manuscript, after a period of 6 months has elapsed since that first publication, anyone [crossed out] (including Earth First!) will have the right to publish the

material freely. However, the period might possibly be extended beyond 6 months. See enclosed letter to NY Times.

In any case, you can immediately make up to 5 copies of the manuscript for your own use. If you wear gloves while making the copies you won't mess up any fingerprints or anything, so the FBI won't be able to claim you have damaged any evidence.

How do you know this letter really comes from FC? Some part of the letter we are sending to the NY Times will probably be published in the newspaper, and you can [crossed out] compare it with the copy we are sending you. The authenticity of the material that we are sending to the NY Times will be confirmed by means of our secret identifying number.

FC

Letter to Tom Tyler

[Tom Tyler was a professor of social psychology at the University of California-Berkeley.]

Dr. Tyler:

This is a message from FC. The FBI calls us "unabom." We read a newspaper article in which you commented on recent bombings, including ours, as an indication of social problems. We are sending you a copy of a manuscript that we hope the *New York Times* will get published for us.

The trouble with psychologists is that in commenting on what people say or do they often concentrate exclusively on the non-rational motivations behind speech or behavior. But human behavior has a rational as well as an irrational component, and psychologists should not neglect the rational component. So if you take the trouble to read our manuscript and do any further thinking about the "unabom" case, we suggest that you should not only consider our actions as a symptom of some social or psychological problems; you should also give attention to the substance of the issues that we raise in the manuscript. You might ask yourself, for example, the following questions:

Do you think we are likely to be right, in a general way, about the kind of future that technology is creating for the human race?

If you think we are wrong, then why do you think so? How would you answer our arguments? Can you sketch a PLAUSABLE [sic] scenario for the future technological society that does not have the negative characteristics indicated by our scenario?

If you think we are likely to be right about the future, do you consider that kind of future acceptable? If not, then what, if anything, do you think can be done about it?

Do you think our analysis of PRESENT social problems is approximately correct? If not, why not? How would you answer our arguments?

If you think we have identified some present social problems correctly, do you think anything can be done about them? Will they get better or worse with continual growth and progress?

We apologize for sending you such a poor copy of our manuscript. We can't make copies at a public copy machine because people would get suspicious if they saw us handling our copies with gloves.

FC

Letter to David Gelernter

Dr. Gelernter:

People with advanced degrees aren't as smart as they think they are. If you'd had any brains you would have realized that there are a lot of people out there who resent bitterly the way techno-nerds like you are changing the world and you wouldn't have been dumb enough to open an unexpected package from an unknown source.

In the epilog of your book, "Mirror Worlds," you tried to justify your research by claiming that the developments you describe are inevitable, and that any college person can learn enough about computers to compete in a computer-dominated world. Apparently, people without a college degree don't count. In any case, being informed about computers won't enable anyone to prevent invasion of privacy (through computers), genetic engineering (to which computers make an important contribution), environmental degradation through excessive economic growth (computers make an important contribution to economic growth) and so forth.

As for the inevitability argument, if the developments you describe are inevitable, they are not inevitable in the way that old age and bad weather are inevitable. They are inevitable only because techno-nerds like you make them inevitable. If there were no computer scientists there would be no progress in computer science. If you claim you are justified in pursuing your research because the developments involved are inevitable, then you may as well say that theft is inevitable, therefore we shouldn't blame thieves.

But we do not believe that progress and growth are inevitable.

We'll have more to say about that later.

FC

P.S. Warren Hoge of the New York Times can confirm that this letter does come from FC.

How to hit an Exxon exec

[Handwritten:] How to hit an Exxon exec:

Send book-like package -> to his **home** preceded by a letter saying I am sending him a book I've written on oil-related environmental concerns — attacking environmental position — and I'd like to have his comments on it before preparing final version of manuscript.

For return address: Get names and addresses of several big-time business execs and call direct[unreadable] to get their numbers, until you hit one who has an unlisted number. Use his return address. Thus you'll have a real return address, but the Exxon exec can't get his number to call for verification.

OR — send package with return address of (an oil?) exploration firm.

Also, put in the letter a disclaimer stating that the book represents my own personal views and not those of the company I work for. This give [sic.] a touch of realism, and it also explains why the letter is not on the company letterhead. (But try to Fake private letterhead.)

SPANISH -> ENVIAN A ABIGAIL VAN BUR[...] UNA CARTA DE UNA MU[...]ER[...] QUE AFIRMA HABER DESCU[...]IERTE DESQUE [...] [...]ARIDO MANDO ES MIEM BRO DE F.C.

[...] QUE NO QUIERO (?) DEH ____ A [...] ESPOSE. CONFIRMANA LA PUBLICO DES_PCION
DEL R[...]EO.

THEN SENT TO ABAIGAIL [unreadable] A LETTER OF ____ THAT AFFIRMS HAVING DIS-
COVERED THAT HER COVER IS A MEMBER OF F.C. TELL THEM THAT I DON'T WANT
TO DEBATE HER HUSBAND THAT WILL CONFIRM THE PUBLIC DISPOSITION OF THE AC-
CUSED

University of Michigan Special Collections Library (Labadie Collection)

These communiques were transcribed by The Wildernist editorial team and taken from The
Wild Will Project.

Comments on the communiques from Individualists Tending toward the Wild

Último Reducto – Some comments in reference to the communiques from Individualists Tending toward the Wild

Último Reducto

2015

After reading the five communiques that the Individualists Tending toward the Wild⁷⁹ (ITS) have published on <http://liberaciontotal.lahaine.org>, Último Reducto (UR) wish to make some comments about these texts:⁸⁰

We are not going to go into the worn and generally sterile debate here about whether or not the use of violence as a means for combating the techno-industrial system is appropriate. Our critiques will go in other directions:

1. It is unfortunate what an overwhelming number of spelling mistakes, syntax errors, failures of grammatical concordance, stylistic defects, punctuation mistakes, etc., appear in ITS' first four communiques, since it makes reading them much more difficult and less attractive for those who might want to do so.

Some probably think this critique is rather superficial, that the content of the communiques is what matters, not their form. And, in a certain way, they are partly right. But, without denying that what they say is what is fundamental, and how they say it is secondary, we must point out that it is also important to take care of form, even though it may only be for purely practical reasons. Terrible grammar and poor style in expressing oneself makes it difficult not only because fewer readers correctly interpret the text, but also because fewer even go through the annoyance of reading it to the end. If almost every line makes you have to stop, forcing you to go back and/or mentally correct the spelling mistakes or reread the sentences over and over trying to imagine the true meaning of what you're reading because of the stylistic and syntax failures, the function of the text as a means of expression and diffusion becomes greatly reduced. Moreover, the fact that ITS uses Spanish so badly in these communiques could make it easier for certain technophiles (and other people who are scandalized by the attacks, verbal or non-verbal, against modern technology, leftist values and civilization) to pass the buck, making superficial

⁷⁹ From 27 April 2011, 22 May 2011, 9 August 2011, 21 September 2011, and 19 December 2011, respectively.

⁸⁰ What we say in most of these commentaries generally also goes for the communique from the Terrorist Cells for the Direct Attack – Anti-civilization Faction (CTPAD-FA).

critiques of the form and avoiding going deeper into the content of the communiques. For many it will be easier to dismiss ITS as a gang of uneducated people because of their bad grammar and preemptively reject the validity of everything ITS says than to force themselves to understand it and work on a serious response to their ideas. If those who position themselves against the techno-industrial system and civilization want their ideas and/or actions to be taken seriously, by their possible allies as well as by their enemies (and this supposes they therefore make their ideas public through texts), they should make clear that they are not a bunch of irrational, ignorant and/or negligent nobodies, forcing themselves to carry out their work in the most competent way possible (even though this implies going to the trouble of learning or exercising certain linguistic skills and adequately revising and correcting their texts before making them public; as well as forming, documenting, etc., in other non-linguistic aspects).

It must be pointed out, in any case, that in their fifth communique (from December 19, 2011, which claimed the attack on Greenpeace), a notable improvement could be noted in this aspect.

2. Also in relation to the use of language, it is worth pointing out that the excessively insulting and contemptuous tone that ITS use not only to refer to technophiles but also to leftists, to the defenders of other versions of anti-civilization theory, and to people in general, is overboard. It is overboard, not because many of them do not deserve contempt, but because expressing it such an exaggerated way does not contribute anything to the rational comprehension of the text and can give the impression (true or not, the practical effects are the same), that the members of ITS suffer a lack of self-control over their emotions and that the hidden aim of their communiques is, after all, to vent.⁸¹ And this could also subtract respectability from their communiques.

3. And, continuing with the practical critique of form, it must be pointed out that ITS' communiques tend to be excessively long and contain redundancies, digressions and unnecessary fragments (for example, *Último Reducto* are still asking ourselves what the supposed mathematical formula on the principle of causality in their fourth communique was all about). One could say the fundamentals in many fewer words, and that would improve the reading and the readers' comprehension of it.

In fact, mere common sense should have dictated to ITS the convenience of measuring their words and being brief and concise when claiming their actions, even if only so as not to unnecessarily leave a trail.

That is all regarding the practical importance of taking care of form. Below UR will make some critiques about the content of ITS' communiques.

4. It is obvious that ITS have drawn upon on the work of Ted Kaczynski (alias Unabomber or Freedom Club–FC for short) and UR, among others, in expressing themselves.⁸² But it must be pointed out that, in UR's opinion⁸³, ITS have misinterpreted some aspects of Kaczynski's ideas,

⁸¹ There is certainly reason, in looking at ITS' communiques, to doubt the deep motivation of ITS' actions (or to put it differently: is love of the wild, and the discourse developed based on that value, the real cause of ITS' actions, or only their justification?). But, lacking conclusive facts, drawing conclusions would mean entering into the realm of speculation, so at least for the moment UR will leave this important question open.

⁸² Much of the discourse and terminology used in their communiques is taken from the writings of Kaczynski and/or UR (although in the cases in which they take UR as a reference, ITS do not say it explicitly). For example, expressions like "surrogate activity" or "power process" are taken from *Industrial Society and Its Future* (The Unabomber Manifesto) and expression like "System of Domination" or "psychocultural" are characteristic of much of UR's written work.

⁸³ UR want to clarify that we will draw upon on our own interpretation of Kaczynski's ideas here in order to critique ITS' misinterpretations. The ideal would be for Ted Kaczynski himself to address these points directly, but

despite it being obvious that ITS have understood them for the most part (something that cannot be said for most of those who believe themselves in affinity with him, nor for the majority of his critics).

So, in the 2nd communique, ITS lead one to believe that Ted Kaczynski defends the position of “educating people about the technology that will carry us to our destruction,” when Kaczynski has defended no such thing. In fact, he has instead expressed that those who try to combat the techno-industrial system should not waste time or energy trying to convince the majority of people that they are right or to join their side (see, for example, *Industrial Society and Its Future*, paragraph 189⁸⁴).

Also in the 2nd communique, ITS say that “[Kaczynski] also says that a change of values must come from an education taught from now on; [and that] Kaczynski has based his ideas on the French “Revolution” in order to make the example of that during the Renaissance many values began to flourish in Europe in many people’s minds and just then the uprising in France arose,” and again they are wrong. In the first place, when Kaczynski speaks of a change of values as the prelude of a revolution, he is not referring to educating the masses so that they accept the new values, but rather that a prerequisite for revolutions to happen is that some new values and ideas arise which defy the old ones. He does not in any way speak of “educating” the people, nor that such values should be extended to all of society first or simultaneously through education.⁸⁵ And secondly, Kaczynski is educated enough to know that between the Renaissance and the French Revolution several centuries passed (“just then”?). The Enlightenment (which is what Kaczynski spoke of⁸⁶) is one thing, and the Renaissance is another. If one does not know the difference, how do they expect to be taken seriously?

In the same communique, ITS, err in saying that Kaczynski has said that “now many people is [sic] questioning the use of technology, that they are thinking seriously about abandoning it.” What Kaczynski has said is that there are ever more intelligent people who seriously question technological progress⁸⁷, which is not at all the same. The individuals who are sufficiently intelligent to be able to seriously question technological progress are and will always be a small minority. It is just that, within that minority, there are more and more doing it.

ITS, in their communiques, critique Kaczynski for defending the concept of revolution. UR will leave until later the discussion of what is correct about this critique and here will only focus on pointing out that ITS appear to not be very clear on what the concept of revolution⁸⁸ that Ted Kaczynski defends is, since, for example, they explain that all revolutions seek not only

given the restrictions imposed by his confinement, it is unlikely this will happen. Nevertheless, it is also unlikely that our interpretation of Kaczynski’s ideas deviates greatly from the author’s original ideas. After more than eight years of exchanging correspondence with Kaczynski and numerous translations of his original texts to Spanish (approved by Ted Kaczynski himself—see *Technological Slavery*, Feral House, 2010, page 13), UR believe we are capable enough to be able to point out and critique ITS’ misinterpretations. In any case, UR are the only ones responsible for any error or deviation there might be in our interpretations with respect to the original meaning of Kaczynski’s ideas.

⁸⁴ Due to the poor quality of the great majority of the Spanish editions of this work that circulate around here, UR recommend the following edition: *La Sociedad Industrial y Su Futuro*, Editorial Isumatag, Valladolid, 2011. Specifically paragraph 189 is on page 131 of this edition.

⁸⁵ See, for example, “The Road to Revolution,” in *Technological Slavery*, pg. 222-231, and “The Coming Revolution,” in *Textos de Ted Kaczynski, Último Reducto* (Ed.), Reedición Corregida, 2005, pg. 70-80. *Idem*.

⁸⁶ *Idem*.

⁸⁷ *Idem*.

⁸⁸ Or however one wants to refer to the hypothetical process by which the collapse of the techno-industrial system would be hastened thanks at least in part to the work of a movement against that system.

to destroy the preexisting society, but also to build a new one. But in *Industrial Society and Its Future*, paragraphs 104 (Fourth Principle of History)⁸⁹ and 182⁹⁰, without going further, FC makes clear that one should not try to create a new society, but only to destroy the preexisting one.⁹¹

ITS also say, in the 2nd communique, that “... Kaczynski is in a maximum security prison, isolated from the world that surrounds him since 1996; surely

if he left the prison in this very moment, he would realize the error he has made in writing such a vague declaration...” It seems that some of those who speak publicly about Kaczynski without having tried beforehand to even really have contact with him, believe and try to make others believe that Kaczynski is completely incommunicado, totally isolated from the outside. It is necessary to explain that Ted Kaczynski has not only kept correspondence with people from different countries from the beginning of his incarceration, he also has access to various publications from the written press and the prison’s library. And, at least for several years, he has had contact with other prisoners and received visitors. If he was misinformed it would not be primarily due to his seclusion. In fact, in his writing and correspondence he has frequently shown himself to be much better informed of how industrial society functions than many of those who erroneously believe that he is isolated from the world.

5. The scientific rigor of ITS’ arguments often leaves much to be desired.

The most obvious, though not the only, example of this is that ITS leads one to understand in their 2nd communique that earthquakes are the product of disequilibrium produced in the Earth by the techno-industrial system, without supporting this idea with empirical data, nor even citing references to research that can point in that direction.

In fact, on many occasions, references to serious works and studies are left lacking in ITS’ communiques.

⁸⁹ Page 76 of the edition mentioned in footnote 6 of this text.

⁹⁰ Page 127 of the edition mentioned in footnote 6 of this text.

⁹¹ In reaching some of these false conclusions, ITS have probably based themselves at least in part on the critical commentaries published by UR in “Writings of Ted Kaczynski”. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the interpretation and critique that UR made of some of Kaczynski’s ideas in certain parts of that work (especially in the “critical commentaries”) were in some cases not totally correct. Time and deeper knowledge of Kaczynski’s ideas have made our understanding of them rather more exact at the present than six months ago. It also seems that ITS has probably taken Writings of Ted Kaczynski and some other old texts by UR (for example, *Último Reducto* issue 1, spring 2002) as a reference for their critiques of the individuals and groups that are against the techno-industrial system and defend the concept of revolution. But we must point out that, even though we still think the fundamental values and ideas (dealing with the autonomy of the wild, rejection of the techno-industrial society and civilization and disdain for leftism and hippie-ism) expressed in our texts prior to *Leftism: A Function of Pseudo-critique and Pseudo-revolution in Techno-industrial Society* (2007) are correct, we no longer identify with many of the other ideas expressed in those texts, so it could be that ITS are, at least in reference to UR, criticizing obsolete positions. For example, today UR continue to believe that it is necessary to construct a serious movement that can aspire to effectively oppose the techno-industrial system when the time comes (a point that, as we have said, will be discussed later on), but we no longer believe that movement should refer to itself “revolutionary” (nor that it should call that fight a “revolution”), for purely practical reasons: the term “revolutionary”, due to the use it has been given across history and by those who have used it, inevitably carries a semantic cargo that will always bear more problems than benefits for a movement contrary to techno-industrial society that really intends to be effective. The world and history are full of self-denominated “revolutionaries” and of “revolutions” of every kind, and practically none of them is really compatible with a serious and effective opposition to the techno-industrial system. Calling the struggle against the techno-industrial system a “revolution” means favoring the principles and ends of those who seriously oppose the techno-industrial system being misinterpreted and many undesirable self-proclaimed revolutionaries feeling affinity with them when in reality they should be kept at a distance.

6. Even though going deeply into philosophical discussions is not usually very useful or practical in effectively combating the techno-industrial system, it is necessary to develop and have a minimally solid philosophical basis on which to construct an ideology and an appropriate discourse. And logical contradictions in one's discourse are not exactly a sign of solidity.

For example, ITS should make clear what their real position is toward "absolute truth" (or, what is the same, their position toward relativism) rather than expound on it in such an obviously sloppy and contradictory way as they did in their second and forth communiques. In their second communique (22 May 2011), ITS wield the extremely worn-out relativist cliché that consists of accusing others of believing they "have the absolute truth" in order to criticize the "anti-civilizationists" and "primitivists" who defend the concept of revolution, while in their fourth communique (21 September 2011) ITS try to criticize relativism and admit that they consider "Wild Nature and Individual Autonomy as an absolute and objective truth." That is, ITS, in their second communique, brazenly fall into what they criticize in the fourth. And vice-versa: in the second communique they criticize what they defend in the fourth. This inconsistency does not reflect well on ITS' capacity for logical reasoning, or at least their capacity for correctly and logically expressing their ideas.

But there is something more to say about this whole matter of the defense or denial of the existence of absolute truths. It is a useless and impractical debate when it comes to effectively combating the techno-industrial system. All the time and energy invested in this debate are a waste. Obviously, those who are really against techno-industrial society and civilization and who really love wild Nature do not believe that everything is relative (and, however they call it and whether or not they recognize it, they always take certain things as absolute truths). But not being relativist and knowing that relativism is a sign of pseudo-intelligence, pseudo-rebellion and/or lack of honesty are one thing, and it is another to go around explicitly and spontaneously declaring that absolute truths exist. The first is indispensable, the second superfluous (it only leads us to unproductive digressions and debates). The aim is not to combat relativism. It is enough to not fall into it.

7. Even though one cannot rule out that nanotechnology may manage to pose a serious threat (because of the risk of the so-called "grey goo" or something similar), the distance that exists between the nanotubes and similar nanostructures of the present and those invasive, intelligent nanomachines that are completely autonomous and capable of self-replicating directly by means of the materials of their surroundings—the ones presented to us in science fiction novels or the futuristic speculations of some technophiles—is enormous and will probably be much delayed in being traveled, if it ever manages to be. There are much more imminent threats such as the progressive hybridization of artificial systems with non-artificial systems (for example, the gradual hybridization between human beings and informatic and robotic systems which, in a certain way and degree, is already happening at present: cerebral implants, the implantation of limbs with artificial intelligence, growing psychological and physical dependence on the Internet and mobile phone, etc.), or the mere substitution or elimination of the latter by the former (something that has been increasingly happening over thousands of years and is extending and worsening with every new technological advance. It could be that to a certain point some branches of nanotechnology (those applied to genetic engineering, for example) form an active part in these imminent threats along with many other modern technologies, but they do not constitute the principal core of the threats, and perhaps they are not essential for those threats to be made reality. If one takes

all of this into account, perhaps ITS should have better chosen the immediate target for some of their attacks.

8. In their communiques, ITS say they are not defeatist. If by “defeatist” we understand the attitude of abandoning struggle because one considers it already lost, ITS are not defeatist, since they have not abandoned their struggle. But if we understand “defeatist” to mean the attitude that denies in advance all possibility of victory when in reality it isn’t clear that no possibility exists, ITS are defeatist, as indicated by their way of understanding the concept of anti-technology revolution (or whatever one wants to call the hypothetical process of demolishing the techno-industrial system, assisted at least in part by a movement). Let us analyze ITS’ way of understanding the anti-technology struggle. It would seem that for ITS there are only two general possibilities of thinking about the struggle against the techno-industrial system: the illusory, or “revolutionary,” consists, according to ITS, of believing that a movement against techno-industrial society must be created that is capable of destroying that society through its mere activity (also, according to ITS, of constructing a utopian new society that isn’t industrial or civilized) and the realist one, also according to them, consists of attacking the techno-industrial system with the available means without hoping or pursuing its destruction and without organizing any movement. The second strategy, to call it something, would be the one that ITS follows; the first, according to ITS, is the one followed by all those individuals and groups that are against the techno-industrial system and are the target of ITS’ critiques in their communiques. UR will not deny that many of those who declare themselves against the techno-industrial system defend⁹² proposals that are extremely naive, inefficient and unrealistic about how to carry out the struggle against that system and about what is worth hoping for and pursuing and what isn’t as regards that struggle. Even so, ITS seem not to realize the extreme simplicity of the dichotomy they propose. Between fighting without hope, only to never give an inch and to die with our feet planted (launching attacks like ITS’), and fighting for a chimera, overestimating our own abilities (believing in the future arrival of non-industrial or even uncivilized utopias and/or believing that the mere activity of a movement against the techno-industrial society will result in its demolition), there is room for other possibilities that ITS completely passes over.

To begin with, the techno-industrial system at present is certainly too strong to be destroyed solely or principally through the activity of those who fight against it. But in other circumstances, the situation could be different. In the future, the techno-industrial system could suffer a serious crisis, a great enough weakening to cause its own collapse, or at least as to make it susceptible to being successfully destroyed by a movement that was strong and well-organized enough at that time. It is probable that this crisis will happen sooner or later, since the system is presently faced with various serious threats to its survival (from global ecological problems to problems of maintaining its internal functioning and structure) and it is not clear that it will be able to overcome them all easily and without weakening itself. But a movement against the techno-industrial system that is organized and capable enough will not fall from the sky the day this crisis happens (if it does happen), instead it is something that needs to be created beforehand by means of a patient and laborious process of recruitment and organization. This movement, if it manages to constitute and fortify itself enough, could even assist in the arrival of the crisis. In fact, it must try to do this, since the later this crisis arrives, the less likely it will be for something wild to survive the demolition.

⁹² Here it is worth saying, “we have defended.” See footnote 8.

Of course, all of this is only a possibility. It could be that a serious crisis will never happen. It could be that, although this crisis happens, the collapse of the techno-industrial society does not arrive and this society overcomes. It could be that a movement is never created that is organized and strong enough to annihilate the techno-industrial system when the opportunity arrives... But also, there also exists the possibility for these things to happen and for the techno-industrial system to be destroyed in time. And this possibility should not be discarded lightly. Not only because it could be the only opportunity to manage to end with the techno-industrial system, but because it is not absurd. It could happen. And whether this possibility happens depends in part on the attitude toward it (defeatism or hope) adopted by those who today declare themselves against the techno-industrial system.

On the other hand, between fighting without hope of victory, just to not surrender, and fighting with the hope of achieving victory (as small as the possibility of this happening may be), there is a great difference. Human beings normally try much harder, and with greater tenacity, when they hope to be victorious than when they fight without hope. And as we have seen, there is hope even, though it is remote.

As for non-industrial and/or uncivilized utopia, it must be pointed out that utopia and the design or creation of a new society (or world) prior to the destruction of the pre-existing society (or world) is completely naive. It never goes as expected. To dream that after the fall of techno-industrial society a new world without civilization or domination will arise is to not absolutely understand how the world, societies and human nature work. It is not likely that techno-industrial society will at some point collapse (in a way that leaves a habitable environment for the human beings who would probably survive), but it is possible. It is completely impossible that civilization and domination would disappear if human beings survived after that collapse. Wherever ecosystems permit, great and complex new societies would again arise over time (if they did disappear completely in the collapse), and human beings would continue to be human and behave as such in any kind of society, level of technological development, or ecological environment. To a greater or lesser extent, while the world is the world and human beings are human, there will continue to be injustices and abuses, there will continue to be hierarchies, there will continue to be at least certain kinds of imposition and submission, etc. Forever. And even so, that is not a reason to not take as a reference certain forms of society, certain forms of life and certain levels of technological development that have been the least harmful to the autonomy of wild Nature (including human nature). We know that human nature is the product of the evolutionary adaptation produced over hundreds of millennia of hunter-gatherer nomadic existence. That is the form of life we are biologically programmed for. It is not a matter of dreaming that the world will go back to being populated solely by hunter-gatherer nomads again. But we have to keep in mind that, if techno-industrial society collapses at some point, some human beings would be able to return to living in that way (at least for some centuries).

9. ITS end their 3rd communique with the phrase: "Nature is good, civilization is bad," and in their 4th communique they try to explain what they mean. This, like the matter of relativism, is another example of the philosophical tangles that theory and discussions really against techno-industrial society should avoid falling into. Discussing whether Nature is good, whether the techno-industrial system is bad, what is good and what is bad, whether there are absolute or intrinsic values, etc., is completely futile in effectively combating the techno-industrial system. Of course those who really love wild Nature and reject the techno-industrial system and civilization have a morality or ethic, that is, they have some values. They think—consciously or not—that

some things are more important or valuable than everything else,⁹³ and that some other things are incompatible with the important ones—that is, they are bad. And they think that at least some of the bad things are bad in themselves, always and independently from everything else (that is, they are intrinsically and absolutely bad). And their ideological positions arise, obviously, from this moral basis. But it is one thing to have a moral and non-relativist opposition to civilization and it is another to go from there to unnecessarily provoke discussions about morality and get tangled up in them. The first is indispensable and inevitable, the second is superfluous and hardly effective in advancing the struggle against the techno-industrial system.

10. From what one can infer from their communiques, ITS have demonstrated a fairly good understanding of what leftism consists of in broad strokes (which is much more than can be said of the majority of radicals who believe themselves to be non-leftists), but one detail or another makes one suspect that in some concrete aspects related to this topic (as well as in other matters like the rejection of relativism, grammar and the use of language, the

understanding of some of Kaczynski's ideas, the understanding of the concept of revolution, etc.), ITS are, in any case, still too green.

Perhaps the most significant detail of their incomplete rejection of leftism is their “wager on insurrectionalist immediatism” (2nd communique). ITS seem to not be aware that insurrectionalism, like almost any other kind of anarchism, is leftism, however much many insurrectionalists may rant against the “leftists.” Insurrectionalism has not absolutely broken with its historical origins. The insurrectional theoretical basis, terminology and methods are the inheritance of certain branches of anarchism from past ages (and anarchism has almost always been leftism⁹⁴). This, which is obvious in “pure” insurrectionalism, continues to be evident also in green or anti-industrial insurrectionalism.⁹⁵ And going into terminological and conceptual subtleties such as differentiating between “anarchy” and “anarchism” (something very proper to insurrectionalist discourse, to be sure) does not invalidate it. The discussion over the two terms/concepts doesn't interest anyone except anarchists or libertarians, and they, almost without exception, are what they are: leftists and/or brainless.

Another detail, although much less important (if ITS' leftist contamination were reduced to just this it would hardly be a problem), is the use of “x” to try to avoid the masculine gender in certain words. Putting aside that this ridiculous custom comes from certain ludicrous feminist (and therefore leftist) theories about the macho nature of language and that it is typical of much of leftism, one must note that attempting to eliminate the masculine gender from words denotes a concern with machismo (and therefore inequality, oppression and injustice in general),

⁹³ UR does not believe in the concept of good, and we prefer not to use the term “good” and its derivatives. To look somewhat deeper into the reasons for this rejection of the concept of good and UR's moral basis, see “El mito de la superioridad e inferioridad absolutas como justificación de la dominación,” *Último Reducto* issue 1 B, note 21, page 103.

⁹⁴ And even in the rare cases in which it hasn't been, as may be in the case of Stirner and perhaps some of his followers (and only some), the fact of referring to these ideas with the term “anarchism” has not exactly favored their being recognized as something apart from and completely alien to the majoritarian anarchist currents always based on different libertarian versions of socialism. Normally one puts one (individualists) and the other (collectivists) into the same bag, and takes as given that a minimal affinity exists between any two currents that refer to themselves as anarchists.

⁹⁵ The CTPAD-FA show that they are more realistic and honest in this sense by also rejecting insurrectionalism and recognizing that they are making their communique public on an insurrectionalist web page only because there isn't a really non-leftist infrastructure of affinity that they can turn to to do this.

which is not typical of those who have really broken with leftism and have realized what is really important, what is it worth fighting for (and/or against) and what is only a decoy for keeping rebellion in good hands. Someone who really cares about wild Nature and really rejects techno-industrial society shouldn't give a damn about combating supposed social ills like machismo (especially imaginary "linguistic machismo"). That is not to mention that ITS, consistent with their deficient use of the rules of traditional Spanish grammar, aren't even able to use the "x" adequately (often they do not place it where one supposedly should place it according to this "anti-sexist grammar", and other times they place it where it shouldn't be placed—for example, "lxs individuos").

11. In relation to the topic of leftism, in their 5th communique ITS say that "the war against academics and technologists is declared (that is more than clear and we have shown it) but also the war against leftism". UR is very much in agreement that leftism is a serious threat for those who want to really damage the techno-industrial system, since the true function of leftism is serving that system as a mechanism of self-defense, self-repair and self-perpetuation. Nevertheless, declaring war on leftism, that is, taking combating leftism as an aim, is a tactical error. And it is an error not because leftism does not deserve to be exposed and rejected. In fact, those who really want to seriously and effectively combat the techno-industrial system should firstly be very clear about what leftism is and learn to identify it (in all of its facets and versions, including the forms of leftism that present themselves as critiques of leftism); and, secondly should very clearly mark their distance from leftism and keep away from it and, vice versa, should keep leftism away from their ideas, discourse, close circle and ranks. Declaring war on leftism is a tactical error because leftism is not worth capturing the attention of those who intend to fight the techno-industrial system beyond the mere critique necessary to keep away from it. The objective that those who really love wild Nature and hate the techno-industrial system and civilization have to focus their limited energies, time and resource on is fighting against the techno-industrial system, not against leftism. All serious opposition to the techno-industrial system has to have the rejection of leftism as a prerequisite and has to keep separated from it if it wants to stay healthy, well-directed and effective, in the same way that it is necessary to also keep away from individuals who are vague, irrational, pusillanimous, lacking in self-control, etc.. But it would be a mistake and a waste to declare war on them. As in the case of relativism, it is one thing to take care not to fall into it and another to dedicate yourself to combating it.

Here this critique ends for now.

Much less do we now believe that the struggle against techno-industrial society could or should be carried out through the education of the people, the rational, generalized spreading and argumentation of ideas against techno-industrial society or civilization, the development of ways of life and social models consistent with those ideas, etc.

Therefore, whenever readers find contradictions between what is said in different works by UR, they should consider that the position expressed in the most recent writing is the one that UR presently defends (or at least the closest to this).

On the other hand, the majority of the classical supposed anarcho-individualists, like the contemporary individualists who take them as a reference point, are very contaminated by positions that come from socialism (for example, identification with and defense of groups of supposed victims—the oppressed, the working class, the excluded, the marginal, etc.). Even the most recalcitrant anarcho-individualists, like Stirner, who could not be so easily categorized as leftists,

leave much to be desired as ideological references, since much of their work is infested with pseudo-rebellious attitudes like relativism or irrationalism.

In light of the situation, referring to oneself as anarchist not only doesn't contribute anything practical to the fight against the techno-industrial system, it suggests the existence of a series of awful ideological references and affinities. And this is something that it is better to avoid.

<https://waronsociety.noblogs.org/?p=9238>

The Truth About Primitive Life: A Critique of Anarchoprimitivism

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1. As the Industrial Revolution proceeded, modern society created for itself a self-congratulatory myth, the myth of “progress”: From the time of our remote, ape-like ancestors, human history had been an unrelenting march toward a better and brighter future, with everyone joyously welcoming each new technological advance: animal husbandry, agriculture, the wheel, the construction of cities, the invention of writing and of money, sailing ships, the compass, gunpowder, the printing press, the steam engine, and, at last, the crowning human achievement—modern industrial society! Prior to industrialization, nearly everyone was condemned to a miserable life of constant, backbreaking labor, malnutrition disease, and an early death. Aren’t we so lucky that we live in modern times and have lots of leisure and an array of technological conveniences to make our lives easy? Today I think there are relatively few thoughtful, honest and well-informed people who still believe in this myth. To lose one’s faith in “progress” one has only to look around and see the devastation of our environment, the spread of nuclear weapons, the excessive frequency of depression, anxiety disorders and psychological stress, the spiritual emptiness of a society that nourishes itself principally with television and computer games ... one could go on and on.

The myth of progress may not yet be dead, but it is dying. In its place another myth has been growing up, a myth that has been promoted especially by the anarchoprimitivists, though it is widespread in other quarters as well. According to this myth, prior to the advent of civilization no one ever had to work, people just plucked their food from the trees and popped it into their mouths and spent the rest of their time playing ring-around-the-rosie with the flower children. Men and women were equal, there was no disease, no competition, no racism, sexism or homophobia, people lived in harmony with the animals and all was love, sharing and cooperation.

Admittedly, the foregoing is a caricature of the anarchoprimitivists’ vision. Most of them — I hope — are not quite as far out of touch with reality as that. They nevertheless are pretty far out of touch with it, and it’s high time for someone to debunk their myth. Because that is the purpose of this article, I will say little here about the positive aspects of primitive societies. I do want to make clear, however, that one can truthfully say about such societies a great deal that is positive. In other words, the anarchoprimitivist myth is not one hundred percent myth; it does include some elements of reality.

2. Let’s begin with the concept of “primitive affluence”. It seems to be an article of faith among anarchoprimitivists that our hunting-and-gathering ancestors had to work an average of only two to three hours a day, or two to four hours a day ... the figures given vary, but the maximum stated never exceeds four hours a day, or 28 hours a week (average).⁹⁶ People who give these figures usually do not state precisely what they mean by “work”, but the reader is led to assume that it includes all of the activities necessary to meet the practical exigencies of the hunter-gatherers’ way of life.

Characteristically, the anarchoprimitivists usually fail to cite their source for this supposed information, but it seems to be derived mainly from two essays, one by Marshall Sahlins (*The Original Affluent Society*⁹⁷), and the other by Bob Black (*Primitive Affluence*⁹⁸). Sahlins claimed that for the Bushmen of the Dobe region of Southern Africa, the “work week was approximately

⁹⁶ Example: “What is ‘Green Anarchy’?”, by the Black and Green Network, *Green Anarchy* #9, September 2002, page 13 (“the hunter-gatherer workday usually did not exceed three hours”).

⁹⁷ Sahlins, pages 1–39.

⁹⁸ Bob Black, *Primitive Affluence*; see **List of Works Cited**.

15 hours.”⁹⁹ For this information he relied on the studies of Richard B. Lee. I do not have direct access to Lee’s works, but I do have a copy of an article by Elizabeth Cashdan in which she summarizes Lee’s results much more carefully and completely than Sahlins does.¹⁰⁰ Cashdan flatly contradicts Sahlins: According to her, Lee found that the Bushmen he studied worked more than forty hours per week.¹⁰¹

In a part of his essay that many anarchoprimitivists have found convenient to overlook, Bob Black acknowledges the forty-hour work-week and explains the foregoing contradiction: Sahlins followed early work of Lee that considered only time spent in hunting and foraging. When all necessary work was considered, the work-week was more than doubled.¹⁰² The work omitted from consideration by Sahlins and the anarchoprimitivists was probably the most disagreeable part of the Bushmen’s work-week, too, since it consisted largely of food-preparation and firewood collection.¹⁰³ I speak from extensive personal experience with wild foods: Preparing such foods for use is very often a pain in the neck. It is far more pleasant to gather nuts, dig roots, or hunt game than it is to crack nuts, clean roots, or skin and butcher game — or to collect firewood and cook over an open fire.

The anarchoprimitivists also err in assuming that Lee’s findings can be applied to hunter-gatherers generally. It’s not even clear that those findings are applicable on a year-round basis to the Bushmen studied by Lee. Cashdan cites evidence that Lee’s research may have been done at the time of year when his Bushmen worked least.¹⁰⁴ She also mentions two other hunting-and-gathering peoples who have been shown quantitatively to spend far more time in hunting and foraging than Lee’s Bushmen did,¹⁰⁵ and she points out that Lee may have seriously underestimated women’s working time because he failed to include time spent on childcare.¹⁰⁶

I’m not familiar with any other exact quantitative studies of hunter gatherers’ working time, but it is certain that at least some additional hunter-gatherers worked a great deal more than the forty-hour week of Lee’s Bushmen. Gontran de Poncins stated that the Eskimos with whom he lived about 1939–1940 had “no significant degree of leisure”, and that they “toiled and moiled fifteen hours a day merely in order to get food and stay alive.”¹⁰⁷ He probably did not mean that they worked fifteen hours every day; but it’s clear from his account that his Eskimos worked plenty hard.

Among the Mbuti pygmies principally studied by Paul Schebesta, on days when the women did not fetch a supply of fruits and vegetables from the gardens of their village-dwelling neighbors, their gathering excursions in the forest lasted between five and six hours. Apart from their food-gathering, the women had considerable additional work to do. Each afternoon, for example, a woman had to go again into the forest and come back to camp panting and bowed under a huge load of firewood. The women worked far more than the men, but it seems clear from Schebesta’s account that the men nevertheless worked much more than the three or four hours

⁹⁹ Sahlins, page 21.

¹⁰⁰ Cashdan, *Hunters and Gatherers: Economic Behavior in Bands*.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, page 23.

¹⁰² Bob Black, pages 12–13. Cashdan, page 23.

¹⁰³ Cashdan, pages 23–24.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, page 24.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 24–25.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, page 26.

¹⁰⁷ Poncins, pages 11–126.

a day claimed by the anarchoprimitivists.¹⁰⁸ Colin Turnbull studied Mbuti pygmies who hunted with nets. Due to the advantage conferred by the nets, these Mbuti only needed to hunt about twenty hours per week. But for them: "Netmaking is virtually a full-time occupation... in which both men and women indulge whenever they have both the spare time and the inclination."¹⁰⁹ The Siriono, who lived in a tropical forest in Bolivia, were not pure hunter-gatherers, since they did plant crops to a limited extent at certain times of the year. But they lived mostly by hunting and gathering.¹¹⁰ According to the anthropologist Holmberg, Siriono men hunted, on average, every other day.¹¹¹ They started at daybreak and returned to camp typically between four and six o'clock in the afternoon.¹¹² This makes on average at least eleven hours of hunting, and at three and a half days a week it comes to 38 hours of hunting per week, at the least. Since the men also did a significant amount of work on days when they did not hunt,¹¹³ their work-week, averaged over the year, had to be far more than 40 hours. And but little of this was agricultural work.¹¹⁴ Actually, Holmberg estimated that the Siriono spent about half their waking time in hunting and foraging,¹¹⁵ which would mean roughly 56 hours a week in these activities alone. With other work included, the work-week would have had to be far more than 60 hours. The Siriono woman "enjoys even less respite from labor than her husband", and "the obligation of bringing her children to maturity leaves little time for rest."¹¹⁶ Holmberg's book contains many other indications of how hard the Siriono had to work.¹¹⁷

In *The Original Affluent Society*, Sahlins gives, in addition to Lee's Bushmen, other examples of hunting-and-gathering peoples who supposedly worked little, but in most of these cases he either offers no quantitative estimate of working time, or he offers an estimate only of time spent in hunting and gathering. If Lee's Bushmen can be taken as a guide, this would be well under half the total working time.¹¹⁸ However, for two groups of Australian Aborigines Sahlins does give quantitative estimates of time spent in "hunting, plant collecting, preparing foods and repairing weapons." In the first group the average weekly time each worker spent in these activities was about 26 1/2 hours; in the second group about 36 hours. But this does not include all work; it says nothing, for example, about time spent on child care, in collecting firewood, in moving camp, or in making and repairing implements other than weapons. If all necessary work were counted, the work-week of the second group would surely be over 40 hours. The work-week of the first group did not represent that of a normal hunting-and-gathering band, since the first group had no children to feed. Sahlins himself, moreover, questions the validity of inferences drawn from these data.¹¹⁹ Of course, even if occasional examples could be found of hunting-and-gathering peoples whose total working time was as little as three hours a day, that would matter little for

¹⁰⁸ Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil, pages 9, 17–20, 89, 93–96, 119, 159–160 (men make implements during their "leisure" hours), 170, Bildtafel X (photo of women with huge loads of firewood on their backs).

¹⁰⁹ Turnbull, *Change and Adaptation*, page 18; *Forest People*, page 131.

¹¹⁰ Holmberg, pages 48–51, 63, 67, 76–77, 82–83, 223, 265.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pages 75–76.

¹¹² Ibid., pages 100–101.

¹¹³ Ibid., pages 63, 76, 100.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., page 223.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., page 222.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., page 224.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pages 87, 107, 157, 213, 220, 246, 248–49, 254, 268.

¹¹⁸ Cashdan, page 23.

¹¹⁹ Sahlins, pages 15–17, 38–39.

present purposes, since we are concerned here not with exceptional cases but with the typical working time of hunter-gatherers. Whatever hunter-gatherers' working hours may have been, much of their work was physically very strenuous. Siriono men typically covered about fifteen miles a day on their hunting excursions, and they sometimes covered as much as forty miles.¹²⁰ Covering such a distance in trackless wilderness¹²¹ requires far more effort than covering the same distance over a road or a groomed trail.

"In walking and running through swamp and jungle the naked hunter is exposed to thorns, to spines, and to insect pests... While the food quest is differentially rewarding because food for survival is always eventually obtained, it is also always punishing because of the fatigue and pain inevitably associated with hunting, fishing and collecting food."¹²² "Men often dissipate their anger toward other men by hunting. ... Even if they do not kill anything they return home too to be angry."¹²³

Even picking wild fruit could be dangerous¹²⁴ and could take considerable work¹²⁵ for the Siriono.¹²⁶ The Siriono made little use of wild roots,¹²⁷ but it is well known that many hunter-gatherers relied heavily on roots for food. Usually, gathering edible roots in the wilderness is not like pulling carrots out of the soft, cultivated soil of a garden. More typically the ground is hard, or covered with tough sod that you have to hack through in order to get at the roots. I wish I could take certain anarchoprimitivists out in the mountains, show them where the edible roots grow, and invite them to get their dinner by digging for it. By the time they had enough yampa roots or camas bulbs for a halfway square meal, their blistered hands would disabuse them of any idea that primitives didn't have to work for a living. Hunter gatherers' work was often monotonous, too. This is true for example of root-digging when the roots are small, as is the case with many of the roots that were used by the Indians of western North America, such as bitterroot and the aforementioned yampa and camas. Picking berries is monotonous if you spend many hours at it.

Or try tanning a deerskin. A raw, dry deerskin is stiff, like cardboard, and if you bend it, it will crack, just as cardboard will.

In order to become usable as clothing or blankets, animal skins must be tanned. Assuming you want to leave the hair on the skin, as for winter clothing, there are only three indispensable steps to tanning a deerskin. First, you must carefully remove every bit of flesh from the skin.

¹²⁰ Holmberg, pages 107, 222.

¹²¹ The Siriono's wilderness was not strictly trackless, since they did develop paths by repeatedly using the same routes. Holmberg, page 105. How little these paths resembled the groomed trails found in our national forests may be judged from the fact that they were "scarcely visible" (page 51), "never cleared" (page 105), and "impossible for the uninitiated to follow" (page 106).

¹²² Holmberg, page 249.

¹²³ Ibid., page 157.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pages 65, 249.

¹²⁵ Ibid., page 65.

¹²⁶ There was nothing exceptional about the strenuousness of the Siriono's hunting and foraging activities. E.g.: "The bushmen had followed the wildebeest's trail through thorns and over the parching desert..." Thomas, page 198. "The men had followed the buffalo's track for three Days..." Ibid., page 190. The strenuousness of the Eskimos' life can be judged from a reading of Poncins, Kabloona. See the accounts of hunting excursions by Wooden Leg, a Northern Cheyenne Indian (fatigue, snow-blindness, frozen feet). Marquis, pages 8-9.

¹²⁷ Holmberg, page 65.

Fat in particular must be removed with scrupulous care, because any bit of fat left on the skin will rot it. Next, the skin must be softened. Finally, it must be smoked. If not smoked it will dry stiff and hard after a wetting and will have to be softened all over again. By far the most time-consuming step is the softening. It takes many hours of kneading the skin in your hands, or drawing it back and forth over the head of a spike driven into a block of wood, and the work is very monotonous indeed. I speak from personal experience. An argument sometimes offered is that hunter-gatherers who survived into recent times lived in tough environments, since all of the more hospitable lands had been taken over by agricultural peoples. Supposedly, prehistoric hunter-gatherers who occupied fertile country must have worked far less than recent hunter-gatherers living in deserts or other unproductive environments.¹²⁸ This may be true, but the argument is speculative, and I'm skeptical of it.

I'm a bit rusty now, but I used to have considerable familiarity with the edible wild plants of the eastern United States, which is one of the most fertile regions in the world, and I would be surprised if one could live and raise a family there by hunting and gathering with less than a forty-hour work-week. The region contains a wide variety of edible plants, but living off them would not be as easy as you might think. Take nuts, for example. Black walnuts, white walnuts (butternuts), and hickory nuts are extremely nutritious and often abundant. The Indians used to collect huge piles of them.¹²⁹ If you found a few good trees in October, you could probably gather enough nuts in an hour or less to feed yourself for a whole day. Sounds great, doesn't it? Yes, it does sound great — if you've never tried to crack a black walnut. Maybe Arnold Schwarzenegger could crack a black walnut with an ordinary nutcracker — if the nutcracker didn't break first — but a person of average physique couldn't do it. You have to whack the nut with a hammer; and the inside of the nut is divided up by partitions that are as thick and hard as the outer shell, so you have to break the nut into several fragments and then tediously pick out the bits of meat. The process is time-consuming. In order to get enough food for a day, you might have to spend most of the day just cracking nuts and picking out the bits of meat. Wild white walnuts (not to be confused with the domesticated English walnuts that you buy in the store) are much like black ones. Hickory nuts are not as difficult to crack, but they still have the hard internal partitions and they are usually much smaller than black walnuts. The Indians got around these problems by putting the nuts into a mortar and pounding them into tiny bits, shells, meats, and all. Then they would boil the mixture and put it aside to cool. The fragments of shell would settle to the bottom of the pot while the pulverized meats would settle in a layer above the shells; thus the meats could be separated from the shells.¹³⁰ This was certainly more efficient than cracking the nuts individually, but as you can see it still required considerable work. The Indians of the eastern U.S. utilized other wild foods that required more-or-less laborious preparation to make them edible.¹³¹ It is hardly likely that they would have used such foods if foods that were more easily prepared had been readily available in sufficient quantity.

Euell Gibbons, an expert on edible wild plants, reported an episode of living off the country in the eastern United States.¹³² It's difficult to say what his experience tells us about primitive people's working hours, since he did not give a quantitative accounting of the time he spent in

¹²⁸ This argument is suggested, for example, by Haviland, page 167.

¹²⁹ Fernald and Kinsey, page 149.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, page 148. Gibbons, page 217.

¹³¹ Examples are found in Fernald and Kinsey, *passim*.

¹³² Gibbons, chapter titled "The Proof of the Pudding".

foraging. In any case, he and his partners only foraged for food and processed it; they did not have to tan skins or make their own clothing, tools, utensils, or shelter; they had no children to feed; and they supplemented their diet with high-calorie store-bought foods: cooking-oil, sugar, and flour. On at least one occasion they used an automobile for transportation.

But let's assume for the sake of argument that in the fertile regions of the world wild foods were once so abundant that it was possible to live off the country year round with an average of only, say, three hours of work per day. With such abundant resources it would not be necessary for hunter-gatherers to travel in search of food. One would expect them to become sedentary, and in that case they would be able to accumulate wealth and form well-developed social hierarchies. Hence they would lose at least some of the qualities that anarchoprimitivists value in nomadic hunter-gatherers. Even the anarchoprimitivists do not deny that the Indians of the Northwest Coast of North America were sedentary hunter-gatherers who accumulated wealth and had well-developed social hierarchies.¹³³ The evidence suggests the existence of similar hunting-and-gathering societies elsewhere where the abundance of natural resources permitted it, for example, along the major rivers of Europe.¹³⁴ Thus the anarchoprimitivists are caught in a bind: Where natural resources were abundant enough to minimize work, they also maximized the likelihood of the social hierarchies that anarchoprimitivists abhor.

However, I have not been trying to prove that primitive man was less fortunate in his working life than modern man is. In my opinion the contrary was true. Probably at least some nomadic hunter-gatherers had more leisure time than modern employed Americans do. It's true that the roughly forty-hour work-week of Richard Lee's Bushmen was about equal to the standard American work-week. But modern Americans are burdened with many demands on their time outside their hours of employment. I myself, when working at a forty-hour job, have generally felt busy: I've had to shop for groceries, go to the bank, do the laundry, fill out income-tax forms, take the car in for maintenance, get a haircut, go to the dentist ...there was always something that needed to be done. Many of the people I now correspond with likewise complain of being busy. In contrast, the male Bushman's time was genuinely his own outside of his working hours; he could spend his non-working time as he pleased. Bushman women of reproductive age may have had much less leisure time because, like women of all societies, they were burdened with the care of small children.

But leisure is a modern concept, and the emphasis that anarchoprimitivists put on it is evidence of their servitude to the values of the civilization that they claim to reject. The amount of time expended in work is not what matters. Many authors have discussed what is wrong with work in modern society, and I see no reason to go over that ground again. What does matter is that, apart from monotony, what is wrong with work in modern society is not wrong with the work of nomadic hunter-gatherers. The hunter-gatherer's work is challenging, both in terms of physical effort and in terms of the level of skill required.¹³⁵ The hunter-gatherer's work is purposeful, and its purpose is not abstract, remote, or artificial but concrete, very real, and directly important to the worker: He works to satisfy the physical needs of himself, his family, and other people to whom he is personally close. Above all, the nomadic hunter-gatherer is a free worker: He

¹³³ Coon, pages 36, 179–180, 226, 228, 230, 262.

¹³⁴ Cashdan, page 22. Coon, pages 268–69, 390; see also page 253.

¹³⁵ For skill see, e.g., Poncins, pages 14–15, 38–39, 160, 209–210; Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil, page 7; Holmberg, pages 120–21, 275; Coon, pages 14, 49, 75, 82–83.

is not exploited, he is subservient to no boss, no one gives him orders;¹³⁶ he designs his own work-day, if not as an individual then as a member of a group that is small enough so that every individual can participate meaningfully in the decisions that are made¹³⁷. Modern jobs tend to be psychologically stressful, but there are reasons to believe that primitive people's work typically involved little psychological stress.¹³⁸ Hunter-gatherers' work often monotonous, but it is my view that monotony generally causes primitive people relatively little discomfort. Boredom, I think, is largely a civilized phenomenon and is a product of psychological stresses that are characteristic of civilized life. This admittedly is a matter of personal opinion, I can't prove it, and a discussion of it would take us beyond the scope of this article. Here I will only say that my opinion is based largely on my own experience of living outside the technoindustrial system. How hunter-gatherers felt about their own work is difficult to say, since anthropologists and others who visited primitive peoples (at least those whose reports I've read) usually do not seem to have asked such questions. But the following from Holmberg's is worth noting: "They are relatively apathetic to work (*taba taba*), which includes such distasteful tasks as housebuilding, gathering firewood, clearing, planting, and tilling of fields. In quite a different class, however, are such pleasant occupations as hunting (*gwata gwata*) and collecting (*deka deka*, 'to look for'), which are regarded more as diversions than as work."¹³⁹

This despite the fact that, as we saw earlier, the Siriono's hunting and collecting activities were exceedingly time-consuming, fatiguing, strenuous, and physically demanding.

3. Another element of the anarchoprimitivist myth is the belief that hunter-gatherers, at least the nomadic ones, had gender equality. John Zerzan, for example, has asserted this in *Future Primitive*¹⁴⁰ and elsewhere.¹⁴¹ Probably some hunter-gatherer societies did have full gender equality, though I don't know of a single unarguable example. I do know of hunting-and-gathering cultures that had a relatively high degree of gender equality but fell short of full equality. In other nomadic hunter-gatherer societies male dominance was unmistakable, and in some such societies it reached the level of out-and-out brutality toward women. Probably the most touted example of gender equality among hunter-gatherers is that of Richard Lee's Bushmen, whom we mentioned earlier in our discussion of the hunter-gatherer's working life. It should be noted at the outset that it would be very risky to assume that Lee's conclusions concerning the Dobe Bushmen could be applied to the Bushmen of the Kalahari region generally. Different groups of Bushmen dif-

¹³⁶ This is somewhat of an oversimplification, since compulsory authority and the giving of orders were not unknown among nomadic hunter-gatherers, but generally speaking a high level of personal autonomy in such societies is indicated by a reading of the works cited in this article. See. e.g., Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 83; Poncins, page 174.

¹³⁷ Nomadic hunter-gatherers ordinarily lived in bands that contained between 30 and 130 individuals, including children and babies, and in many cases these bands split up into still smaller groups. Coon, page 191. Cashdan, page 21. Siriono often hunted singly or in pairs; maximum size of hunting party was six or seven men. Holmberg, page 51. Efe pygmies commonly hunted in groups of two to four. Coon, page 88.

¹³⁸ I'll reserve the discussion of stress for some other occasion, but see. e.g., Poncins, pages 212–13, 273, 292. Schebesta. II. Band. I. Teil, page 18, writes: "The economic activity of the hunter-gatherer knows neither haste nor hurry, nor agonizing worry over the daily bread."

¹³⁹ Holmberg, page 101.

¹⁴⁰ "[L]ife before domestication/agriculture was in fact largely one of leisure. ...sexual equality." Zerzan, *Future Primitive*, page 16.

¹⁴¹ "[U]ntil just 10,000 years ago ...humans lived in keeping with an egalitarian ethos with ample leisure time, gender equality..." Zerzan, "Whose Future?", *Species Traitor* N° 1. Pages in this publication are not numbered.

ferred culturally;¹⁴² they didn't even all speak the same language.¹⁴³ At any rate, relying largely on Richard Lee's studies, Nancy Bonvillain states that among the Dobe Bushmen (whom she calls "Ju/'hoansi"), "social norms clearly support the notion of equality of women and men,"¹⁴⁴ and that their "society overtly validates equality of women and men."¹⁴⁵ So the Dobe Bushmen had gender equality, right?

Well, maybe not. Look at some of the facts that Bonvillain herself offers in the same book: "Most leaders and camp spokespersons are men. Although women and men participate in group discussions and decision making, ...men's talk in discussions involving both genders amounts to about two-thirds of the total."¹⁴⁶

Much worse are the forced marriages of girls in their early teens to men much older than themselves.¹⁴⁷ It's true that practices that seem cruel to us may not be experienced as cruel by people of other cultures on whom they are imposed. But Bonvillain quotes words of a Bushman woman that show that at least some girls did experience their forced marriages as cruel: "I cried and cried";¹⁴⁸ "I ran away again and again. A part of my heart kept thinking: 'how come I'm a child and have taken a husband?'"¹⁴⁹ Moreover, "because seniority confers prestige..., the greater age, experience, and maturity of husbands may make wives socially, if not personally, subordinate."¹⁵⁰ Thus, while the Dobe Bushmen no doubt had some of the elements of gender equality, one would have to stretch a point pretty far to claim that they had full gender equality. On the basis of his personal experience, Colin Turnbull stated that among the Mbuti pygmies of Africa, a "woman is in no way the social inferior of a man,"¹⁵¹ and that "the woman is not discriminated against."¹⁵² That sounds like gender equality ...until you look at the concrete facts that Turnbull himself offers in the very same books: "A certain amount of wife-beating is considered good, and the wife is expected to fight back;"¹⁵³ "He said that he was very content with his wife, and he had not found it necessary to beat her at all often,"¹⁵⁴; "Man throws wife to the ground and slaps her;"¹⁵⁵ "Husband beats wife,"¹⁵⁶ "Man beats sister,"¹⁵⁷ "Kenge beats his sister,"¹⁵⁸ "Perhaps he should have beaten her harder, Tungana [an old man] said, for some girls like being beaten,"¹⁵⁹; "Ama-bosu countered by smacking her firmly across the face. Normally Ekianga would have approved of such manly assertion of authority over a disloyal wife."¹⁶⁰ Turnbull mentions two instances

¹⁴² Thomas, pages 11.284–87.

¹⁴³ Encycl. Brit., Vol. 22, article "Languages of the World", section "African Languages", subsection "Khoisan Languages", pages 757–760.

¹⁴⁴ Bonvillain, page 21.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., page 24.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., page 21.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pages 21–22.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., page 22.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., page 23.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pages 21–22.

¹⁵¹ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 270.

¹⁵² Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 154.

¹⁵³ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 287.

¹⁵⁴ Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 205.

¹⁵⁵ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 211.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., page 192.

¹⁵⁷ Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 204.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pages 207–08.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., page 208.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., page 122.

of men giving orders to their wives.¹⁶¹ I have not found any instance in Turnbull's books of wives giving orders to their husbands. Pipestem obtained by wife is referred to as husband's property.¹⁶² "[A boy] has to have [a girl's] permission before intercourse can take place. The men say that once they lie down with a girl, however, if they want her they take her by surprise, when petting her, and force her to their will."¹⁶³ Nowadays we would call that "date rape", and the young man involved would risk a long prison sentence.

For the sake of balance, let's note that Turnbull found among the Mbuti no instance of what we would call "street rape" as opposed to "date rape";¹⁶⁴ husbands were not supposed to hit their wives on the head or in the face;¹⁶⁵ and in at least one case in which a man took to beating his wife too frequently and severely, his campmates eventually found means to end the abuse without the use of force and without overt interference.¹⁶⁶ It should also be borne in mind that the significance of a beating depends on the cultural context. In our society it is a great humiliation to be struck by another person, especially by one who is bigger and stronger than oneself. But since blows were commonplace among the Mbuti,¹⁶⁷ it is probably safe to assume that they were not felt as particularly humiliating. Nevertheless it is quite clear that some degree of male dominance was present among the Mbuti. Among the Siriono: "A woman is subservient to her husband";¹⁶⁸ "The extended family is generally dominated by the oldest active male";¹⁶⁹ "[Women] are dominated by the men";¹⁷⁰ "If a man is out in the forest alone with a woman, ...he may throw her to the ground roughly and take his prize [sex] without so much as saying a word";¹⁷¹ Parents definitely preferred to have male children;¹⁷² "Although the title *ererekwa* is reserved by the men for a chief, it one asks a woman: 'who is your *ererekwa*?' she will invariably reply: 'my husband'";¹⁷³ On the other hand, the Siriono never beat their wives,¹⁷⁴ and "Women enjoy about the same privileges as men. They get as much or more food to eat, and they enjoy the same sexual freedom."¹⁷⁵ According to Bonvillain, Eskimo men "dominate their wives and daughters. Men's dominance is not total, however...."¹⁷⁶ She describes gender relations among the Eskimos in some detail,¹⁷⁷ which may or may not be slanted to reflect her feminist ideology.

¹⁶¹ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, pages 288–89. *Forest People*, page 265.

¹⁶² Turnbull, *Forest People*, pages 115–16.

¹⁶³ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 137.

¹⁶⁴ "I know of no cases of rape.. " Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 121. I can account for the apparent contradiction between this statement and the passage quoted a moment ago only by supposing that since Turnbull was writing before the concept of "date rape" had emerged, he did not consider that forced intercourse in the elima hut, under the circumstances he described, constituted rape. Hence, when he said he knew of no rape among the Mbuti, he was probably referring to something more or less equivalent to what we would call "street rape" as opposed to "date rape"

¹⁶⁵ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 189. However, Turnbull is perhaps inconsistent on this point. Note the passage I quoted a moment ago about Amabosu smacking his wife across the face and Ekianga's reaction.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 287–89.

¹⁶⁷ Numerous examples are scattered through *Wayward Servants* and *Forest People*.

¹⁶⁸ Holmberg, page 125.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, page 129.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, page 147.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, page 163.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, page 202.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, page 148.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, page 128.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, page 147.

¹⁷⁶ Bonvillain, page 295.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pages 38–45.

Among the Eskimos with whom Gontran de Poncins lived, husbands clearly held overt authority over their wives¹⁷⁸ and sometimes beat them.¹⁷⁹ Yet, through their talent for persuasion, wives had great power over their husbands: "It might seem ... that the native woman lived altogether in a state of abject inferiority to the male Eskimo, but this is not the case. What she loses in authority, as compared to the white woman, she makes up, by superior cunning, in many other ways. Native women are very shrewd, and they almost never fail to get what they want"; "It was a perpetual joy to watch this comedy, this almost wordless struggle in which the wife... inevitably got the better of the husband. There does not exist an Eskimo woman untrained in the art of wheedling, not one unable to repeat with tireless and yet insinuating insistence the mention of what she wants, until the husband, worn down by her persistence, gives way"; "Women were behind everything in this Eskimo world";¹⁸⁰ "It is not necessary to be a feminist to ask: 'but what of the status of Eskimo women?' Their status suits them well enough; and I have indicated here and there in these pages that they are not only the mistresses of their households but also, in most Eskimo families, the shrewd prompters of their husbands' decisions."¹⁸¹ However, Poncins may have overstated the extent of Eskimo women's power, since it was not sufficient to enable them to avoid unwanted sex: Wife-lending among these Eskimos was determined by the men, and the wives had to accept being lent whether they liked it or not.¹⁸² At least in some cases, apparently, the women resented this rather strongly.¹⁸³ The Australian Aborigines' treatment of their women was nothing short of abominable. Women had almost no power to choose their own husbands.¹⁸⁴ They are described as having been "owned" by the men, who chose their husbands for them.¹⁸⁵ Young women were often forced to marry old men, and then they had to work to provide their aged husbands with the necessities of life.¹⁸⁶ Not surprisingly, a young woman frequently resisted a forced marriage by running away. She was then beaten severely with a club and returned to her husband. If she persisted in running away, she might even have a spear driven into her thigh.¹⁸⁷ A woman trapped in a distasteful marriage might enjoy the consolation of having a lover on the side, but, while this was "semitolerated", it could lead to violence.¹⁸⁸ A woman might even go to the length of eloping with her lover. However: "They would be followed, and if caught, as a punishment the girl became, for the time being, the common property of her pursuers. The couple were then brought back to the camp where, if they were of the right totem division to marry, the man would have to stand up to a trial by having spears thrown at him by the husband and his relations... and the girl was given beating by her relatives. If [the couple] were not of the right totem division to marry, they would both be speared when found, as their sin was unforgivable."¹⁸⁹

¹⁷⁸ Poncins, pages 113–14, 126.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pages 198. See also page 117.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., pages 114–15.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., page 126.

¹⁸² Ibid., page 113.

¹⁸³ Ibid., pages 112–13. See also Coon, page 223 ("often the wives lent say that they do not enjoy this").

¹⁸⁴ Elkin, pages 132–33). Massola, page 73.

¹⁸⁵ Massola, pages 74, 76.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., page 75. Elkin, pages 133–34.

¹⁸⁷ Massola, page 76.

¹⁸⁸ Elkin, page 136. Massola, pages 73, 75. Coon, pages 260–61.

¹⁸⁹ Massola, pages 75–76.

Although there was “real harmony and mutual understanding in most Aboriginal families”, wife-beating was practiced.¹⁹⁰ According to A. P. Elkin, under some circumstances—for example, on certain ceremonial occasions—women had to submit to compulsory sex, which “implies that woman is but an object to be used in certain socially established ways.”¹⁹¹ The women, says Elkin, “may often not object,”¹⁹² but: “They sometimes live in terror of the use which is made of them at some ceremonial times.”¹⁹³ Of course, no claim is made here that all of the foregoing conditions prevailed in all parts of aboriginal Australia. Culture was not uniform across the continent. Coon says that the Australians were nomadic, but he also states that in parts of southeastern Australia, namely “The better-watered parts, particularly Victoria and the Murray River country”, the aborigines were “relatively sedentary.”¹⁹⁴ According to Massola, in the drier parts of southeastern Australia the aborigines had to cover long distances between fast-drying wells in times of drought.¹⁹⁵ This corresponds with the high degree of nomadism described for other arid parts of Australia, where “Aborigines moved from waterhole to waterhole along well-defined tracks in small family groups. The whole camp moved and rarely established bases.”¹⁹⁶ In stating that in “the better-watered parts” the aborigines were “relatively sedentary”, Coon doubtless means that “in fertile regions there were well-established camping areas, close to water, where people always camped at certain times of year. Camps were bases from which people made forays into the surrounding bush for food, returning in the late afternoon or spending a few days away.”¹⁹⁷ Coon says that in part of the well-watered Murray River country each territorial clan had a headman and a council consisting mainly of men, though in a few cases women were also elected to the council; whereas, farther to the north and west, there was little formal leadership and “control over the women and younger males was shared between” the men aged from thirty to fifty.¹⁹⁸ Thus Australian women had very little overt political power. Yet, as among Poncins’s Eskimos, certainly in our society, and probably in every society, the women often exercised great influence their menfolk¹⁹⁹.

The Tasmanians also were nomadic hunter-gatherers (though some were “relatively sedentary”),²⁰⁰ and it’s not clear that they treated women any better than the Australians did. “In one account we are told that a band living near Hobart Town before the colonists’ arrival was raided by neighbors who killed the men who tried to stop them and took away their women. And there are other accounts of individual cases of marriage by capture. Sometimes when a man from a neighboring band had the right to marry a girl, but neither she nor her parents liked him, it is said that they killed the girl rather than give her up”;²⁰¹ “The other tribes considered [a

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pages 76–77.

¹⁹¹ Elkin, pages 135, 137–38.

¹⁹² Ibid. .page 138.

¹⁹³ Ibid., page 138 (footnote 12).

¹⁹⁴ Coon. pages 105, 217, 253.

¹⁹⁵ Massola, page 78. ,

¹⁹⁶ Encycl. Brit., Vol. 14, article “Australia”, page 437.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Coon, pages 253, 255.

¹⁹⁹ Massola, page 77.

²⁰⁰ Coon, pages 105,217.

²⁰¹ Ibid., page 215.

certain tribe] cowards, and raided them to steal their women";²⁰² "Woorradly raped and killed a sister-in-law."²⁰³

Here I should make clear that it is not my intention to argue against gender equality. I myself am enough a product of modern industrial society to feel that women and men should have equal status. My purpose at this point is simply to exhibit the facts concerning the relations between the sexes in hunting-and-gathering societies.

4. There is a problem involved in any attempt to draw conclusions about original, "pure" hunter-gatherer cultures from reported observations of living hunter-gatherer societies. If we have a description of a primitive culture, it ordinarily will have been written by some civilized person. If the description is detailed, then, by the time it was written, the primitive people described very likely will have had significant contact, direct or indirect, with civilization, and such contact can bring about dramatic changes in a primitive culture. Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, in the epilogue to the 1989 edition of her book *The Harmless People*,²⁰⁴ describes the catastrophically destructive effect of civilization on the Bushmen she knew. Harold B. Barclay has pointed out that (for example) modern Eskimos "are quite pleased with their high powered rifles, motorboats and so forth."²⁰⁵ "So forth" would include snowmobiles. Hence, Barclay says, "hunter gatherers today are in no sense identical to hunter gatherers of a thousand or ten thousand year ago."²⁰⁶ According to Cashdan, writing in 1989, "all hunter-gatherers in the world today are in contact, directly or indirectly, with the world economy. This fact should caution us against viewing today's hunter-gatherers as 'snapshots' of the past."²⁰⁷ Of course, in seeking evidence of the way human beings lived prior to the advent of civilization, no one in his right mind would turn to peoples who used motorboats, snowmobiles, and high-powered rifles,²⁰⁸ or to peoples whose cultures had obviously been grossly disrupted by the intrusion of civilized societies. We look for accounts of hunter-gatherers written (at least) several decades ago and at a time when — as far as we can tell — their cultures had not been seriously altered by contact with civilization. But it's not always easy to tell whether contact with civilization has altered a primitive culture. Coon is clearly aware of this problem, and in his excellent survey of hunter-gatherer cultures he gives the following example of how seemingly slight interference from civilization can have a dramatic effect on a primitive culture: When "well-meaning missionaries handed out steel axes" to the Yir Yoront aborigines of Australia, the "Yir Yoront world almost came to an end. The men lost their authority over their wives, a generation gap appeared," and a system of trade stretching over hundreds of miles was disrupted.²⁰⁹ Richard Lee's Bushmen are perhaps the favorite example for anarchoprimitivists and leftish anthropologists who want to present a politically-correct image of hunter-gatherers, and Lee's Bushmen were among the least "pure" of the hunter-gatherers we've mentioned here. They may not even have always been hunter gatherers.²¹⁰ In any case

²⁰² Ibid., page 336.

²⁰³ Ibid., page 252.

²⁰⁴ Thomas, pages 262–303.

²⁰⁵ Harold B. Barclay, letter to editor, *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, Spring/Summer 2002, pages 70–71.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Cashdan, page 21.

²⁰⁸ The Eskimos described by Poncins used rifles to some extent, but these apparently were not their main means of procuring food; and they had no motorboats or snowmobiles.

²⁰⁹ Coon, page 276.

²¹⁰ Haviland, page 168 ("some of the Bushmen of Southern Africa, have at times been farmers and at others pastoral nomads").

they had probably been trading with agricultural and pastoral peoples for a couple of thousand years.²¹¹ The Kung Bushmen whom Mrs. Thomas knew had metal acquired through trade,²¹² and the same apparently was true of Lee's Bushmen.²¹³ Mrs. Thomas writes: "In the ten to twenty years after we started our work, many academics [this presumably includes Richard Lee] developed an enormous interest in the Bushmen. Many of them went to Botswana to visit groups of Kung Bushmen, and for a time in Botswana, the anthropologists/Bushmen ratio seemed almost one to one."²¹⁴ Obviously, the presence of so many anthropologists may itself have affected the behavior of the Bushmen. In the 1950's,²¹⁵ when Turnbull studied them, still more in the 1920's and 1930's²¹⁶ when Schebesta studied them, the Mbuti apparently had not had much direct contact with civilization, so that Schebesta went so far as to claim that "the Mbuti not only racially, but also psychologically and in terms of cultural history, are a primeval phenomenon (Urphanomen) among the races and peoples of the Earth."²¹⁷ Yet the Mbuti had already begun to be somewhat affected by civilization a few years before Schebesta's first visit to them.²¹⁸ And for centuries before that, the Mbuti had lived in close contact (which included extensive trade relations) with non-civilized, village-dwelling cultivators of crops.²¹⁹ As Schebesta wrote, "The belief that the Mbuti have been hermetically sealed off from the outer world has been laid to rest once and for all."²²⁰ Turnbull goes farther: "This is in no way to say that the [social] structure to be found among the Mbuti is representative of an original pygmy hunting and gathering structure; in fact probably far from it, for the repercussions of the invasion of the forest by the village cultivators have been enormous."²²¹

Though some of Gontran de Poncins's Eskimos were "purer" than others,²²² it appears that all of them had at least some trade goods from the whites. If any reader cares to take the trouble to track down the earliest primary sources — perhaps some of Vilhjalmur Stefansson's work — so as to approach as closely as possible to an original and "pure" Eskimo culture, I would be interested to hear of his or her findings. But it is possible that even long before European contact the Eskimos' culture may have been affected by something that they received from a non-hunting society; for their sled dogs may not have originated with hunter-gatherers.²²³

With the Siriono we come closer to purity than we do with the Bushmen, the Mbuti, or Poncins's Eskimos. The Siriono did not even have dogs,²²⁴ and even though they cultivated crops to a limited extent anthropologists regarded their culture as Paleolithic (Old Stone Age).²²⁵ Some

²¹¹ Ibid., page 167. Cashdan, pages 43–44.

²¹² Thomas, page 94.

²¹³ Pfeiffer. *Emergence of Man*. pages 345–46. Pfeiffer is not a reliable source of information, but anyone with access to good library facilities will be able to consult Richard Lee's own writings.

²¹⁴ Thomas. page 284.

²¹⁵ Turnbull. *Forest People*. pages 20, 21, 27 & unnumbered page of information at end of book.

²¹⁶ Schebesta, I. Band. pages 37. 46, 48.

²¹⁷ Ibid.. page 404.

²¹⁸ Ibid.. pages 141–42.

²¹⁹ Ibid., passim. E.g., I. Band. page 87; II. Band, I. Teil. page 11.

²²⁰ Ibid., I. Band, page 92.

²²¹ Turnbull. *Wayward Servants*. page 16. See also pages 88–89.

²²² Poncins. pages 161–62.

²²³ Coon, pages 58–59.

²²⁴ Holmberg, page 69. Richard Lee's Bushmen did have dogs. Sahlins "The Original Affluent Society". So did the Mbuti. Turnbull. *Forest People*, page 101. Schebesta, II. Band. I. Teil. pages 89–93.

²²⁵ Lauriston Sharp, in Holmberg. page xii.

of the Siriono studied by Holmberg had had little or no contact with whites prior to Holmberg's arrival²²⁶ and, among those Siriono, European tools were rarely encountered²²⁷ until Holmberg himself introduced them.²²⁸ Instead, the Siriono made their tools of naturally-occurring local materials.²²⁹ The Siriono moreover were so primitive that they could not count beyond three.²³⁰ Nevertheless, Siriono culture might have been affected by contact with more "advanced" societies, since Holmberg thought the Siriono were "probably a remnant of an ancient population that was exterminated, absorbed, or engulfed by more civilized invaders."²³¹ Lauriston Sharp even suggested that the Siriono might have "degenerated" [sic] "from a more advanced technical condition," though Holmberg rejected this view and Sharp himself considered it "irrelevant."²³² In addition, the Siriono might have been affected indirectly by European civilization, since probably at least some of the diseases from which they suffered, e.g., malaria, had been brought to the Americas by Europeans.²³³ It's not surprising that most of the hunter-gatherers I've mentioned here — like those cited by the anarchoprimitivists and the politically-correct anthropologists — were affected by direct or indirect contact with agricultural or pastoral peoples even long before their first contact with Europeans, because outside of Australia, Tasmania, and the far west and north of North America "populations which remained faithful to the old hunter-gatherer way of live were small and scattered."²³⁴ Consequently, with the possible exception of some who lived on small islands, they necessarily had some form of contact with surrounding non-hunter-gatherer populations.

Probably the Australian Aborigines and the Tasmanians were the hunter-gatherers who were purest when Europeans first found them. Australia was the only continent that was inhabited exclusively by hunter-gatherers until the white man's arrival, and Tasmania, an island just to the south of Australia, was even more isolated. But Tasmania may have been visited by Polynesians, and in the north of Australia there was some limited contact with people from Indonesia and New Guinea prior to the arrival of Europeans.²³⁵ Still earlier contact with outsiders, who may or may not have been hunter-gatherers, is probable.²³⁶ Thus we have no conclusive proof that hunter-gatherer cultures that survived into recent times had not been seriously affected by contact with non-hunter-gatherers by the time the first descriptions of them were written. Consequently, more or less uncertainty is involved in using reports on recent hunter-gatherer societies to draw conclusions about gender relations among prehistoric hunter-gatherers. And any conclusions drawn from archaeological remains about the social relationships between men and women can only be highly speculative. So, if you like, you can reject all evidence from descriptions of recent hunter-gatherer cultures, and in that case we know almost nothing about the gender relations of

²²⁶ Holmberg, pages xx-xxii, 1-3.

²²⁷ Ibid., page 26.

²²⁸ Ibid., page xxiii.

²²⁹ Ibid., pages 25-26.

²³⁰ Ibid., page 121.

²³¹ Ibid., page 10.

²³² Ibid., page xii.

²³³ See Ibid., pages 207. 225-26, "The principal ailments of which the Siriono are victims are malaria, dysentery, hookworm, and skin diseases", page 226. Malaria, at least, was probably introduced to the Americas by Europeans. *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 7. article "malaria", page 725.

²³⁴ Leakey, page 201 (map caption).

²³⁵ Coon, pages 25 (footnote), 67.

²³⁶ *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 14, article "Australia", page 434.

prehistoric hunter-gatherers. Or (with the necessary reservations) you can accept the evidence from recent hunter-gatherer societies, and in that case the evidence clearly points to a significant degree of male dominance. In either case, there is no evidence to support the anarchoprimitivists' belief that all or most human societies had full gender equality prior to the advent of agriculture and animal husbandry some ten thousand years ago.

5. Our review of the facts concerning gender relations in recent hunter-gatherers societies helps to reveal something of the psychology of the anarchoprimitivists and that of their cousins, the politically-correct anthropologists.

The anarchoprimitivists, and many politically-correct anthropologists, cite any evidence they can find that hunter-gatherers had gender equality, while systematically ignoring the abundant evidence of gender inequality found in eyewitness reports of hunter-gatherer cultures. For example, the anthropologist Haviland, in his textbook *Cultural Anthropology*, states that an "important characteristic of the food-foraging [hunter-gatherer] society is its egalitarianism."²³⁷ He acknowledges that the two sexes may have had different status in such societies, but claims that "status differences by themselves do not imply any necessary inequality", and that in "traditional food-foraging societies, nothing necessitated special deference of women to men."²³⁸ If you check the pages listed in Haviland's index for the entries "Bushmen", "Ju/'hoansi" (another name for the Dobe Bushmen), "Eskimo", "Inuit" (another name for Eskimos), "Mbuti", "Tasmanian", "Australian", and "Aborigine" (the Siriono are not listed in the index), you will find no mention of wife-beating, forced marriage, forced sexual intercourse, or any of the other indications of male dominance that I've cited above. Haviland does not deny that these things occurred. He does not claim, for example, that Turnbull merely invented his stories of wife-beating among the Mbuti, or that such-and-such evidence shows that Australian Aboriginal women were not subjected to involuntary sex before the arrival of Europeans. He simply ignores these issues, as if they didn't exist. And it's not that Haviland isn't aware of the issues. For example, he quotes from A. P. Elkin's book, *The Australian Aborigines*,²³⁹ an indication that he not only is familiar with the book but considers it a reliable source of information. Yet Elkin's book, which I cited earlier, provides ample evidence of Australian Aboriginal men's tyranny over their women²⁴⁰ — evidence that Haviland fails to mention. It's pretty clear what is going on: Equality of the sexes is a fundamental tenet of the mainstream ideology of modern society. As highly-socialized members of that society, politically-correct anthropologists believe in the principle of gender equality with something akin to religious conviction, and they feel a need to give us little moral lessons by holding up for our admiration examples of the gender equality that supposedly prevailed when the human race was in a pristine and unspoiled state. This portrayal of primitive cultures is driven by the anthropologists' own need to reaffirm their faith, and has nothing to do with an honest search for truth.

To take another example, I've written to John Zerzan four times inviting him to back up his claims about gender equality among hunter-gatherers.²⁴¹ The answers he gave me were vague

²³⁷ Haviland, page 173.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid., page 395.

²⁴⁰ Elkin, pages 130–38.

²⁴¹ Letters from the author to John Zerzan: 2/13/03. page 2; 3/16/03; 5/2/3, pages 5–6; 4/18/04. page 1.

and evasive.²⁴² I would gladly publish here Zerzan's letters to me on this subject so that the reader could judge them for himself. However, I wrote to Zerzan requesting permission to publish his letters, and he denied me that permission.²⁴³ With his letters he sent me photocopies of pages from a few books that contained vague, general statements ostensibly supporting his claims about gender equality; for instance, this statement by John E Pfeiffer, who is neither a specialist nor an eyewitness of primitive behavior, but a popularizer: "For reasons unknown sexism arrived with settling and farming, with the emergence of complex society."²⁴⁴

Zerzan also sent me a photocopy of a page from Bonvillain's book containing the following statement: "In foraging band [hunter-gatherer] societies, the potential for gender equality is perhaps the greatest..."²⁴⁵ But Zerzan did not include copies of the pages on which Bonvillain said that male dominance was evident in some hunter-gatherer societies such as that of the Eskimos, or the pages on which she gave information that cast gave doubt on her own claim of gender equality among the Dobe Bushmen, as I discussed above.

Zerzan himself acknowledged that the material he sent me was "obviously not definitive", though he asserted that it was "completely representative in general."²⁴⁶ When I pressed him for further backing for his claims,²⁴⁷ he sent me a copy of his essay *Future Primitive*, from the book of the same name.²⁴⁸ In this essay he cites most of his sources by giving only the authors' last names and their publications' dates; the reader presumably is expected to look up further information in a table of references provided elsewhere in the book. Since Zerzan did not send me a copy of the table of references, I had no way of checking his sources. I pointed this out to him,²⁴⁹ but he still failed to send me a copy of his table of references. In any case, there is good reason to suspect that Zerzan was uncritical in selecting his sources. For example, he quotes the late Laurens van der Post;²⁵⁰ but in his book *Teller of Many Tales*, J. D. F. Jones, a former admirer of Laurens van der Post, has exposed the latter as a liar and a fraud.

²⁴² Letters from John Zerzan to the author: 3/2/03; 3/18/03; 3/26/03; 5/12/03; 4/28/04; 5/22/04. The only thing Zerzan said in his letters that I considered worth answering at this point is his claim that the sources I had cited to him were "out of date" (Letter to the author, 5/22/04, page 2). He offered no explanation of this statement. As a former student of history, Zerzan should be aware of the importance of going back to primary sources whenever possible. In the present context, that means going back to eyewitness accounts based on observation of hunter-gatherer societies at a time when these were still relatively unspoiled. But for at least thirty years there have been no more unspoiled primitive peoples. Hence, any primary sources that are useful for present purposes must date back at least thirty years (i.e., to before 1975) and usually longer than that. It's true that here and in my letters to Zerzan I've relied not only on primary but also on secondary sources, due to the fact that my incarceration limits my access to primary sources. But Zerzan offered no evidence whatever to discredit the information that I cited to him from secondary sources (or from primary ones, either). Nor have any of the more "up to date" sources that I've seen offered anything to disprove the information in question. They mostly just ignore that information, as if it didn't exist. The whole issue gets shoved under the carpet.

²⁴³ Letter from the author to John Zerzan, 5/11/04. Letter from John Zerzan to the author, 5/20/04.

²⁴⁴ Pfeiffer, *Emergence of Society*, page 464? I can't give the page number with certainty, because it is "cut off" on the photocopy that Zerzan sent me.

²⁴⁵ Bonvillain, page 294. The photocopy that Zerzan sent me was actually from the 1995 edition of the same book, in which the identical sentence appears on page 271.

²⁴⁶ Letter from John Zerzan to the author, 3/2/03 (footnote).

²⁴⁷ Letter from the author to John Zerzan, 5/2/03, pages 5-6.

²⁴⁸ Zerzan, *Future Primitive and Others Essays*.

²⁴⁹ Letter from the author to John Zerzan, 4/18/04, page 1.

²⁵⁰ Zerzan, "Future primitive", page 32.

Even if taken at face value, the information in *Future Primitive* gives us nothing solid on the subject of gender relations. Vague, general statements are of little use. As I pointed out earlier; Bonvillain and Turnbull made general assertions about gender equality among the Bushmen and the Mbuti respectively, and those assertions were contradicted by concrete facts that Bonvillain and Turnbull themselves reported in the same books. On subjects other than gender equality, some of the statements in *Future Primitive* are demonstrably false. To take a couple of examples:

- i. Zerzan, relying on one “De Vries”, claims that among hunter-gatherers childbirth is ‘without difficulty of pain.’²⁵¹ Oh, really? Here’s Mrs. Thomas, writing from her personal experience among the Bushmen: “Bushmen women give birth alone ... unless a girl is bearing her first child, in which case her mother may help her, or unless the birth is extremely difficult, in which case a woman may ask the help of her mother or another woman. A woman in labor may clench her teeth, may let her tears come or bite her hands until blood flows, but she may never cry out to show her agony.”²⁵²

Since natural selection eliminates the weak and the defective among hunter-gatherers and since primitive women’s work keeps them in good physical condition, it is probably true that childbirth, on average, was not as difficult among hunter-gatherers as it is for modern women. For Mbuti women, according to Schebesta, delivery was usually easy (though this does not imply that it was free of pain). On the other hand, breech deliveries were much feared and usually ended fatally both for the mother and the for child.²⁵³

- ii. Relying on one “Duffy”, Zerzan claims that the Mbuti “look on any form of violence between one person and another with great abhorrence and distaste, and never represent it in their dancing or their playacting.”²⁵⁴ But Hutereau and Turnbull independently have provided eyewitness accounts according to which the Mbuti did indeed playact violence between human beings.²⁵⁵ More important, there was plenty of real-life violence among the Mbuti. Accounts of physical fights and beatings are scattered throughout Turnbull’s books, *The Forest People* and *Wayward Servants*. To cite just one of the numerous examples, Turnbull mentions a woman who lost three teeth in fighting with another woman over a man.²⁵⁶ I’ve already mentioned Turn-bull’s statements about wife-beating among the Mbuti.

It’s worth noting that Zerzan apparently believes that our ancestors were capable of mental telepathy.²⁵⁷ But particularly revealing is Zerzan’s quotation of “Shanks and Tilley”: “The point of archaeology is not merely to interpret the past but to change the manner in which the past is interpreted in the service of social reconstruction in the present.”²⁵⁸ This is virtually open

²⁵¹ Ibid., page 33.

²⁵² Thomas. pages 156–57.

²⁵³ Schebesta. I. Band, page 203.

²⁵⁴ Zerzan. “Future Primitive”. page 36.

²⁵⁵ Turnbull. *Wayward Servants*. page 138 & footnote 2.

²⁵⁶ Turnbull. *Wayward Servants*, page 206.

²⁵⁷ Zerzan. “Future Primitive”, page 26. In an interview with Julien Nitzberg, *Mean* magazine. April 2001, page 69, Zerzan said. “Freud... believed that before language, it’s likely that people were pretty telepathic “. In my letter to him of 5/2/03. page 6. I asked Zerzan to refer me to the place in Freud’s works where Freud had made such a statement, but Zerzan never answered that question.

²⁵⁸ Zerzan. “Future Primitive”. page 15.

advocacy of the proposition that archaeologists should slant their findings for political purposes. What better evidence could there be of the massive politicization that has taken place in American anthropology over the last 35 or 40 years? In view of this politicization, anything in recent anthropological literature that portrays primitive peoples' behavior as politically correct must be viewed with the utmost skepticism.

After citing to Zerzan some of the examples of gender inequality that I've discussed above, I questioned his honesty on the ground that he had "systematically excluded nearly all of the evidence that undercuts the idealized picture of hunter-gatherer societies" that he wanted to present.²⁵⁹ Zerzan answered that he "did not find many credible sources that contradicted his outlook."²⁶⁰ This statement strains credulity. Some of the examples that I cited to Zerzan (and have discussed above) were from books on which he himself had relied—those of Bonvillain and Turnbull.²⁶¹ Yet he somehow managed to overlook all of the evidence in those books that contradicted his claims. Since Zerzan has read widely about hunter-gatherer societies, and the Australian Aborigines are among the best-known hunter-gatherers, I find it very difficult to believe that he has never come across any accounts of the Australians' mistreatment of women. Yet he never mentions such accounts—not even for the purpose of refuting them.

One does not necessarily have to assume any conscious dishonesty on Zerzan's part. As Nietzsche said, "The most common lie is the lie one tells to oneself; lying to others is relatively the exception."²⁶² In other words, self-deception often precedes deception of others. An important factor here may be one that is well known to professional propagandists: people tend to block out — to fail to perceive or to remember — information that they find uncongenial²⁶³. Since information that discredits one's ideology is highly uncongenial, it follows that people will tend to block out such information. A young anarchoprimitivist with whom I've corresponded has provided me with an amazing example of this phenomenon. He wrote to me: "there is no question about the persistence [sic] of patriarchy in all other oceanic societies, but none seems apparent in the [Australian] Aborigines — According to A. P. Elkin's *The Australian Aborigines* wives were not held in a restrictive marriage at all."²⁶⁴ It was apparent that my anarchoprimitivist friend had read Elkin's discussion of women's position in Australian Aboriginal society. I've cited above some of the relevant pages of Elkin's book, such as those on which he states that Australian Aboriginal women sometimes lived in terror of the compulsory sex to which they were subjected at some ceremonial times. Any reasonably rational person who will take the trouble to read those pages²⁶⁵ will find himself hard-pressed to explain how my anarchoprimitivist friend could have read that material and then claimed in all seriousness that no patriarchy seemed apparent in Australian Aboriginal society — unless my friend simply blocked out of his mind the information that he found ideologically unacceptable. My friend did not question the accuracy of Elkin's in-

²⁵⁹ Letter from the author to John Zerzan. 4/18/04. page 6.

²⁶⁰ Letter from John Zerzan to the author. 4/28/04.

²⁶¹ Zerzan sent me a photocopy of a page from Bonvillain's book with his letter of 3/2/03. In "Future Primitive", pages 34–36. Zerzan cites "Turnbull (1962)" and "Turnbull (1965)". This presumably refers to *Forest People* and *Wayward Servants*. In "Future Primitive", page 33. Zerzan also cites Mrs. Thomas's book, yet he conveniently forgets Mrs. Thomas's statements about childbirth when he claims (on the same page of "Future Primitive") that childbirth is "without difficulty or pain" among hunter-gatherers.

²⁶² Nietzsche. page 186.

²⁶³ Encycl. Brit. Vol. 26, article "Propaganda" page 176.

²⁶⁴ Letter from the publisher of *Species Traitor* to the author, 4/17/03. page 6.

²⁶⁵ Elkin. pages 130–38.

formation; in fact, he was relying on Elkin as an authority. He simply remained oblivious to the information that indicated patriarchy among the Australian Aborigines. But this time it should be sufficiently clear to the reader that what the anarchoprimitivists (and many anthropologists) are up to has nothing to do with a rational search for the truth about primitive cultures. Instead, they have been developing a myth.

6. I've already had occasion at several points to mention violence among nomadic hunter-gatherers. Examples of violence, including deadly violence, among hunter-gatherers are abundant. To mention only a few such examples: "One account has been published of a mortal battle between an inland band of Tasmanians having access to ochre, and a coastal band who had agreed to exchange seashells for the other's product. The inland people brought their ochre, but the coastal people arrived empty handed. Men were killed because of a breach of faith over the two materials, neither of which was edible or of any other practical use. In other words, the Tasmanians were just as 'human' as the rest of US."²⁶⁶ The Tasmanians made their spears "in two lengths...the shorter ones were for hunting, the longer ones for fighting."²⁶⁷ Among the hunter-gatherers of the Andaman Islands, "grievances were remembered, and revenge might be taken later. The raiders either crept through the jungle or approached in canoes. They leaped on their victims by surprise, quickly shot [with arrows] all the men and women unable to escape, and took away any uninjured children, to adopt them..."; "If enough members of the group survived to reconstitute the band, they might eventually grow numerous enough to seek revenge, and a lengthy feud might arise. [Peace efforts were] initiated by the women because it was they who had kept the hostilities alive, egging on their men."²⁶⁸

Among at least some groups of Australian Aborigines, women at times would provoke their menfolk to deadly violence against other men.²⁶⁹ Among the Eskimos with whom Gontran de Poncins lived, there was "a good deal of killing", and it was sometimes a woman who persuaded a man to kill another man.²⁷⁰ Paintings made in rock shelters by prehistoric hunter-gatherers of eastern Spain show groups of men fighting each other with bows and arrows.²⁷¹

One could go on and on. But I don't want to give the impression that all hunter-gatherer were violent. Turnbull refers to numerous nonlethal fights and beatings among the Mbuti, but in those of his books that I've read he mentions not a single case of homicide.²⁷² This suggests that deadly violence was rare among the Mbuti at the time when Turnbull knew them. Siriono women sometimes fought physically, striking each other with sticks, and there was a good deal of aggression among the children, even with sticks or burning brands used as weapons.²⁷³ But men rarely fought each other with weapons,²⁷⁴ and the Siriono were not warlike.²⁷⁵ Under extreme provo-

²⁶⁶ Coon, page 172.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., page 75.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., pages 243-44.

²⁶⁹ Massola, page 77.

²⁷⁰ Poncins, pages 115-120, 125.162-65.237-38.244.

²⁷¹ Encycl. Brit., Vol. 28, article "Spain", page 18.

²⁷² Apart from infanticide. Schebesta and Turnbull agree that when twins were born only one member of the pair was allowed to live. Schebesta, I. Band, page 138. Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 130. Schebesta further states (same page) that babies born crippled were done away with. Turnbull, however, mentions a girl who was born with a "diseased" hip but was allowed to live. Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 265. Schebesta, II. Band I. Teil, pages 274, 277, indicates that trespassing and theft could lead to deadly violence, but Turnbull mentions no such thing.

²⁷³ Holmberg, pages 126-27, 157, 209-210.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., page 157.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., pages 11, 158-59.

cation they did kill certain whites and missionized Indians,²⁷⁶ but among the Siriono themselves intentional homicide was almost unknown.²⁷⁷ Among the Bushmen whom Mrs. Thomas knew aggression of any kind was minimal, though she makes clear that this was not necessarily true of all Bushman groups.²⁷⁸

It is important, too, to realize that deadly violence among primitives is not even remotely comparable to modern warfare. When primitives fight, two little bands of men shoot arrows or swing war-clubs at one another because they want to fight; or because they are defending themselves, their families, or their territory. In the modern world soldiers fight because they are forced to do so, or, at best, because they have been brainwashed into believing in some kook ideology such as that of Nazism, socialism, or what American politicians choose to call “freedom”. In any case the modern soldier is merely a pawn, a dupe who dies not for his family or his tribe but for the politicians who exploit him. If he’s unlucky, maybe he does not die but comes home horribly crippled in a way that would never result from an arrow- or a spear-wound. Meanwhile, thousands of non-combatants are killed or mutilated. The environment is ravaged, not only in the war zone, but also back home, due to the accelerated consumption of natural resources needed to feed the war machine. In comparison, the violence of primitive man is relatively innocuous. That, however, it isn’t good enough for the anarchoprimitivists or for today’s politically correct anthropologists. They can’t deny altogether the existence of violence among hunter-gatherers, since the evidence for it is incontrovertible. But they will stretch the truth as far as they think they can get away with in order to minimize the amount of violence in the human past. It’s worthwhile to give an example that illustrates the silliness of some of the reasoning that they use. In reference to *Homo habilis*, a physically primitive ancestor of modern man, the anthropologist Haviland writes: “They obtained their meat not by killing live animals but by scavenging *Homo habilis* got meat by scavenging from carcasses of dead animals, rather than hunting live ones. We know this because the marks of stone tools on the bones of butchered animals commonly overlie marks the teeth of carnivores made. Clearly, *Homo habilis* did not get to the prey first.”²⁷⁹

But, as Haviland certainly ought to know, many or most predatory animals engage both in hunting and in scavenging. For example, bears, African lions, martens, wolverines, wolves, coyotes, foxes, jackals, hyenas, the raccoon dog of Asia, the Komodo dragon, and some vultures both hunt and scavenge.²⁸⁰ Thus, the fact that *Homo habilis* engaged in scavenging provides no evidence whatsoever that he did not also hunt. I emphasize that I do not know or care whether *Homo habilis* hunted. I see no reason why it should be important for us to know whether our half-human ancestors two million years ago were bloodthirsty killers, peaceful vegetarians, or something in between. The point here is simply to show what kind of reasoning some anthropologists will resort to in their effort to make the human past look as politically correct as possible. Since political correctness has warped the portrayal not only of the human past but of wild nature generally, it should be pointed out that deadly violence among wild animals is not confined

²⁷⁶ Ibid., pages 114, 159.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., page 152.

²⁷⁸ Thomas, pages 284–87.

²⁷⁹ Haviland, pages 77, 78.

²⁸⁰ It’s common knowledge that coyotes and at least some species of bears both hunt and scavenge. For lions, martens, foxes, jackals, hyenas, raccoon dogs, Komodo dragons, and vultures, see *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 4, page 910; Vol. 6, pages 196, 454, 945; Vol. 7, pages 383, 884; Vol. 9, page 876; Vol. 12, page 439; Vol. 17, page 449; Vol. 23, page 421. For wolves and wolverines, see *Encyclopedia Americana*, International Edition, 1998, Vol. 29, pages 94–95, 102.

to predation of one species upon another. Killing of one member of a species by another member of the same species does occur. For example, it is well known that wild chimpanzees often kill other chimpanzees.²⁸¹ Elephants sometimes kill one another in fights, and the same is true of wild pigs.²⁸² Among the sea birds called brown boobies, two eggs are laid in each nest. After the eggs are hatched, one of the chicks attacks the other and forces it out of the nest, so that it dies.²⁸³ Komodo dragons sometimes eat one another,²⁸⁴ and there is evidence that cannibalism occurred among some dinosaurs.²⁸⁵ (Evidence of cannibalism among prehistoric humans is controversial.)²⁸⁶

I do want to make clear that it is by no means my intention to exalt violence. I prefer to see people (and animals) get along smoothly with one another. My purpose is only to expose the irrationality of the politically-correct image of primitive peoples and of wild nature.

7. An important element of the anarchoprimitivist myth is the belief that hunter-gatherer societies were free of competition and were characterized instead by sharing and cooperation. Collin Turnbull's early writings on the Mbuti pygmies seem to be quite frank, but his work leaned increasingly toward political correctness as time went by.²⁸⁷ Writing in 1983 (18 and 21 years, respectively, after he had published *Wayward Servants* and *The Forest People*), Turnbull noted that Mbuti children had no competitive games,²⁸⁸ and after referring to the high value that he claimed modern society placed on "competition" and "economic independence,"²⁸⁹ he contrasted these with "the well-trying primitive values of family-writ-large: interdependence, cooperation, and reliance on community ...rather than on self..."²⁹⁰

But according to Turnbull's own earlier work, physical fighting was commonplace among the Mbuti.²⁹¹ If a physical fight isn't a form of competition, then what is? It's clear in fact that the Mbuti were a very quarrelsome people, and, in addition to physical fights, there were many

²⁸¹ See, e.g., *Time* magazine, 8/19/02, page 56.

²⁸² *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 23, article "Mammals", pages 436, 449–450.

²⁸³ "Sibling Desperado", *Science News*, Vol. 163, February 15, 2003.

²⁸⁴ *Encycl. Brjt.*, Vol. 6, article "Komodo dragon", page 945.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 17, article "Dinosaurs", page 319.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, article "Krapina remains", pages 981–82; Vol. 26, article "Prehistoric Peoples and Cultures", page 66.

²⁸⁷ Here are a couple of examples that illustrate the politically-correct tendency of Turnbull's later work: In 1983, Turnbull wrote that he objected to the word "pygmy" because "it invites the assumption that height is a significant factor, whereas, in the Ituri it is of remarkable insignificance to both the Mbuti and their neighbors, the taller Africans who live around them." *Change and Adaptation*, first page of the Introduction. But 21 years earlier Turnbull had written: "The fact that they [the Mbuti] average less than four and a half feet in height is of no concern to them; their taller neighbors. Who jeer at them for being So puny, are as clumsy as elephants...", *Forest People*, page 14. "They [a certain group of pygmies] pitied me for my height, which made me So clumsy ", *Ibid.*, page 239. Turnbull also claimed in 1983 that the Mbuti had never fought in resistance to the taller Africans. invasion of their forest, *Change and Adaptation*, page 20. But Schebesta, I. Band. pages 81–84, reported oral traditions according to which many of the Mbuti had indeed fought the villagers, and so effectively that they had driven them (for a time) entirely out of the eastern part of the forest at some point during the first half of the 19th century. Oral traditions are unreliable. but these stories were so widespread as to indicate a certain probability that Some such fighting had occurred. Turnbull did not explain how he knew that these traditions were wrong and that the Mbuti had not fought. Turnbull was familiar with Schebesta's work. See. e.g., *Forest People*, page 20.

²⁸⁸ Turnbull, *Change and Adaptation*, page 44.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, page 154.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, page 158.

²⁹¹ Turnbull mentions physical fighting in *Forest People*, pages 110, 122–23, and in *Wayward Servants*, pages 188, 191, 201, 205, 206, 212.

verbal disputes among them.²⁹² Generally speaking, any dispute, whether it is settled physically or verbally; is a form of competition: the interests of one person conflict with those of another, and their quarreling is an effort by each to promote his own interests at the other's expense. The Mbuti's jealousies also were evidence of competitive impulses.²⁹³

Two things for which the Mbuti competed were mates and food. I've already mentioned a case of two women who fought over a man,²⁹⁴ and quarreling over food apparently was common.²⁹⁵ It's worth noting that Turnbull, in his early work, described the Mbuti as "individualists."²⁹⁶ There is abundant evidence of competitiveness and/or individualism among other primitive peoples. The Nuer (African pastoralists), the pagan Germanic tribes, the Carib Indians, the Siriono (who lived mainly by hunting and gathering), the Navajo, the Apaches, the Plains Indians, and North American Indians generally have all been described explicitly as "individualistic."²⁹⁷ But "individualism" is a vague word that may mean different things to different people, so it's more helpful to look at definite facts that have been reported. Some of the works that I cite in Note 202 do back up with facts their application of the term "individualistic" to the peoples mentioned. Holmberg writes:

"When an Indian [Siriono] has reached adulthood he displays an individualism and apathy toward his fellows that is remarkable. The apparent unconcern of one individual for another—even within the family—never ceased to amaze me while I was living with the Siriono. Frequently men would depart for the hunt alone—without so much as a goodbye—and remain away from the band for weeks at a time without any concern on the part of their fellow tribesmen or even their wives...". "Unconcern with one's fellows is manifested on every hand. On one occasion Ekwataia went hunting. On his return darkness overcame him about five hundred yards from camp. The night was black as ink, and Ekwataia lost his way. He began to call for help—for someone to bring him fire or to guide him into camp by calls. No one paid heed to his request. After about half an hour, his cries ceased, and his sister Seaci, said: 'A jaguar probably got him'. When Ekwataia returned the following morning, he told me that he had spent the night sitting on the branch of a tree to avoid being eaten by jaguars."²⁹⁸ Holmberg repeatedly remarks on the uncooperative character of the Siriono, and says that those of them who became disabled by age or sickness were simply abandoned by the others.²⁹⁹ Among other primitive peoples, individualism takes other forms. For example, among most of the North American Indians, warfare was a decidedly individualistic enterprise. "The Indians, being highly individualistic and often fighting more for personal glory than group advantage, never developed a science of warfare."³⁰⁰ According to the Cheyenne Indian Wooden Leg: "When any battle actually began it was a case of every man for himself. There were no ordered groupings, no systematic movements in concert, no compulsory goings and comings. Warriors mingled indiscriminately, every one looked out for himself only, or

²⁹² Turnbull, *Forest People*, pages 33, 107, 110; *Wayward Servants*, pages 105,106,113, 157,212,216.

²⁹³ Turnbull mentions jealousies in *Wayward Servants*, pages 103, 118,157.

²⁹⁴ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 206.

²⁹⁵ Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 107; *Wayward Servants*, pages 157, 191,198, 201.

²⁹⁶ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 183.

²⁹⁷ Evans-Pritchard, page 90. Davidson, pages 10, 205. Reichard, pages xviii, xxi, xxxvii. Debo, page 71. Wissler, page 287. Holmberg, pages 151, 259, 270 (footnote 5)). *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 2, article "Carib", page 866; Vol. 13, article "American Peoples, Native", page 380.

²⁹⁸ Holmberg, pages 259–260.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 93, 102, 224–26, 228, .256–57, 259, 270 (footnote 5)).

³⁰⁰ Leach, page 130.

each helped a friend if such help were needed and if the able one's personal inclination just then was toward friendly helpfulness. The Sioux tribes fought their battles as a band of individuals, the same as we fought ours, and the same as was the way of all Indians I ever knew."³⁰¹

During the first half of the 20th century, Stanley Vestal interviewed many Plains Indians who still remembered the old days. According to him:

"It cannot be too often repeated that-except when defending his camp-the Indian was totally indifferent to the general result of a fight: all he cared about was his own coups. Time and again old men have said to me, in discussing a given battle, 'Nothing happened that day', meaning simply that the speaker had been unable to count a coups";³⁰² "Plains Indians could not wage war by plan. They had no discipline. On the rare occasions when they did have a plan, some ambitious young man was sure to launch a premature attack."³⁰³

Compare this with modern man's way of waging war: Troops move in obedience to carefully elaborated plans; every man has a specific task to perform in cooperation with other men, and he performs it not for personal glory but for the advantage of the army as a whole. Thus, in warfare, it is modern man who is cooperative and primitive man who is, generally speaking, an individualist.

Primitive individualism is not confined to warfare. Among the Indians of subarctic North America, who were hunter-gatherers, there was an "individualistic relationship to the supernatural," "self-reliance," and a "high value placed on personal autonomy."³⁰⁴ Australian Aboriginal children were "taught to be self reliant."³⁰⁵ Among the Woodland Indians of the eastern United States, "great emphasis was placed on self-reliance and individual competence,"³⁰⁶ and the Navajo "insisted upon self-reliance."³⁰⁷ The Nuer of Africa extolled the virtues of "stubbornness" and "independence"; "Their only test of character is whether one can stand up for oneself."³⁰⁸ Evidence of competition among primitives is ample. In addition to the Mbuti, at least some other hunter-gatherers competed for mates or for food. "One cannot remain long with the Siriono without noting that quarreling and wrangling are ubiquitous."³⁰⁹ The majority of quarrels "arose directly over questions of food", but sexual jealousy also led to fights and quarrels among the Siriono.³¹⁰ The Australian Aborigines fought for the possession of women.³¹¹ Poncins reports the case of one Eskimo who killed another in order to take his wife, and he states that any Eskimo would kill in order to prevent his wife from being taken from him.³¹²

Notwithstanding Turnbull's remark that Mbuti children had no competitive games, some Mbuti adults did play tug-of-war, which clearly is a competitive game;³¹³ and certain other primitive peoples too had competitive games. Massola mentions war games among the Aus-

³⁰¹ Marquis, pages 119-122.

³⁰² Vestal, page 60.

³⁰³ Ibid., page 179.

³⁰⁴ Encycl. Brit., Vol. 13, article "American Peoples, Native", pages 351-52,360.

³⁰⁵ Massola, page 72.

³⁰⁶ Encycl. Brit., Vol. 13, article "American Peoples, Native", pages 384,386.

³⁰⁷ Reichard. page xxxix.

³⁰⁸ Evans-Pritchard. pages 90, 181-83.

³⁰⁹ Holmberg. page 153.

³¹⁰ Ibid., pages 126-27, 141. 154.

³¹¹ Coon, pages 260-61.

³¹² Poncins, pages 125, 244.

³¹³ Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil. page 241.

tralian Aborigines, and a ball game in which “the boy who caught the ball the greatest number of times was considered to be the winner.”³¹⁴ The game of lacrosse originated among the Algonkin Indians.³¹⁵ Navaho children of both sexes had foot-races,³¹⁶ and among the Plains Indians almost all of the boys’ games were competitive.³¹⁷ The Cheyenne Indian Wooden Leg described some of the competitive sports in which his people had engaged: “Horse races, foot races, wrestling matches, target shooting with guns or with arrows, tossing the arrows by hand, swimming, jumping and other like contests.”³¹⁸ The Cheyenne also competed in war, in hunting, and “in all worthy activities.”³¹⁹

Richard E. Leakey quotes Richard Lee thusly: “Sharing deeply pervades the behavior and values of !Kung [Bushmen] foragers. Sharing is central to the conduct of life in foraging societies.” Leakey adds: “This ethnic is not confined to the !Kung: it is a feature of hunter-gatherers in general.”³²⁰ Of course, we share too. We pay taxes. Our tax money is used to help poor or disabled people through public-assistance programs, and to carry on other public activities that are supposed to promote the general welfare. Employers share with their employees by paying them wages. But aha! you answer, we share only because we are forced to do so. If we tried to evade payment of taxes we would go to prison; if an employer offered insufficient wages and benefits, no one would work for him, or perhaps he would have trouble with the union or with the minimum-wage laws. The difference is that hunter-gatherers shared voluntarily, out of loving, open-hearted generosity ...right?

Well, not exactly. Just as our sharing is governed by tax laws, union contracts, and the like, sharing in hunter-gatherer societies was commonly governed by “rigid procedural rules” that “must be followed in order to keep the peace.”³²¹ Many hunter-gatherers were just as grudging about sharing their food as we are about paying our taxes, and just as anxious to make sure that they got not a bit less than what the rules entitled them to. Among Richard Lee’s Bushmen: “Distribution [of meat] is done with great care, according to a set of rules. Improper meat distributions can be the cause of bitter wrangling among close relatives.”³²² Among the Tikerarmiut Eskimos, even though the rules for distribution of whale meat “were scrupulously followed, there still might be vociferous arguments.”³²³ The Siriono had food taboos that might have served as rules for the distribution of meat, but the taboos were very often disregarded.³²⁴ Though the Siriono did share food, they did so with extreme reluctance.³²⁵ “People constantly complain and quarrel about the distribution of food. Enia said to me one night: “When someone comes near the house, women hide the meat. Women even push meat up their vaginas to hide it.”³²⁶ “If, for instance, a person does share food with a kinsman, he has the right to expect some in return.

³¹⁴ Massola, pages 78–80.

³¹⁵ Wissler, pages 223, 304.

³¹⁶ Reichard, page 265.

³¹⁷ *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 13, article “American Peoples, Native”, page 381.

³¹⁸ Marquis, page 39.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 64,66,120,277.

³²⁰ Leakey, page 107.

³²¹ Coon, pages 176– 77. Cashdan, pages 37–38. refers to “precise” or “formal” rules of meat-sharing among Australian Aborigines. Mbuti pygmies, and Kung Bushmen.

³²² Richard B. Lee, quoted by Bonvillain, page 20.

³²³ Coon, page 125.

³²⁴ Holmberg, pages 79–81.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 87–89, 154–56.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 154–55.

Reciprocity, however, is almost always forced, and is sometimes even hostile. Indeed, sharing rarely occurs without a certain amount of mutual distrust and misunderstanding.”³²⁷ The Mbuti had rules for sharing meat,³²⁸ but there was, “often as not, a great deal of squabbling over the division of the game.”³²⁹ “Once an animal is killed, it is taken to be shared out on return to the camp. This is not to say that sharing takes place without any dispute or acrimony. On the contrary, the arguments that ensue when the hunt returns to camp are frequently long and loud;”³³⁰ “When the hunt returns to camp, men and women alike, but particularly women, may be seen furtively concealing some of their spoils under the leaves on their roofs, or in empty pots nearly”;³³¹ “It would be a rare Mbuti woman who did not conceal a portion of the catch in case she was forced to share with others.”³³² The fact that some hunter-gatherers often quarreled over the distribution conflicts with the anarchoprimitivists’ claims about “primitive affluence.” If food was so easy to get, then why would people quarrel over it? It should also be noted that the general rule of sharing among hunter-gatherers applied mainly to meat. There was relatively little sharing of vegetable foods,³³³ even though vegetable foods often constituted the greater part of the diet.³³⁴

But I don’t want to give the impression that all primitive peoples or all hunter-gatherers were radical individualists who never cooperated and never shared except under compulsion. The Siriono, in terms of their selfishness, callousness, and unco-operativeness, were an extreme case. Among most of the primitive peoples about whom I’ve read there seems to have been a reasonable balance between cooperation and competition, sharing and selfishness, individualism and community spirit. In stating that hunter-gatherers did not usually share vegetable foods, shellfish, or the like outside of the household, Coon also indicates that such foods might indeed be shared with other families if the latter were hungry.³³⁵ Notwithstanding their individualistic traits, the Cheyenne (and probably other Plains Indians) placed a high value on generosity (i.e., voluntary sharing),³³⁶ and the same was true of the Nuer.³³⁷ The Eskimos with whom Gontran de Poncins lived were so generous in sharing their belongings that Poncins described their community as “quasi-communist” and stated that “all labored in common with no hint of selfishness.”³³⁸ (Poncins did note, however, that an Eskimo expected every gift to be repaid eventually with a return gift.)³³⁹ The importance to the Mbuti of cooperation in hunting and in some other activities

³²⁷ Ibid., page 151.

³²⁸ Cashdan, page 37. Turnbull, *Forest People*, pages 96–97. Schbesta, II. Band, I. Teil, pages 96,97.

³²⁹ Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 107.

³³⁰ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, pages 157–58. Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil, page 97, mentions a fierce quarrel over the distribution of meat that “almost led to bloodshed”.

³³¹ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 120.

³³² Ibid., page 198.

³³³ Coon, page 176. Cashdan, page 38. Bonvillain, page 20. Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 167. *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 14, article “Australia”, page 438.

³³⁴ Cashdan, page 28. Coon, pages 72–73. Bonvillain, page 20. *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 14, article “Australia”, page 438. Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 178, possibly underestimated the importance of vegetable foods in the Mbuti’s diet (“hunting and gathering being equally important to the economy”). According to Schebesta, I. Band, pages 70–71, 198; II. Band, I. Teil, pages 11, 13–14, the Mbuti nourished themselves principally on vegetable products. At most 30% of their diet consisted of animal products, and of that 30% a considerable part consisted not of meat but of foods such as snails and caterpillars that were gathered like vegetables, not hunted.

³³⁵ Coon, page 176.

³³⁶ Marquis, page 159.

³³⁷ Evans-Pritchard, page 90.

³³⁸ Poncins, pages 78–79.

³³⁹ Ibid., page 121.

is described by Turnbull,³⁴⁰ who also states that failure to share in time of need was a “crime,”³⁴¹ and that the Mbuti shared to some extent even when there was no necessity for sharing.³⁴²

In contrast to the callousness shown by the Siriono, the old or crippled among the Mbuti were treated with a care and respect that derived mainly from affection and a sense of responsibility.³⁴³ Poncins’s Eskimos would abandon helpless old people to die when it became too difficult to take care of them any longer, but they must have done this reluctantly, because as long as they had the old people with them, “they look after the aged on the trail, running back so often to the sled to see if the old people are warm enough, if they are comfortable, if they are not perhaps hungry and want a bit of fish.”³⁴⁴

Just as one could go on and on citing examples of selfishness, competition, and aggression among hunter-gatherers, so one could go on and on citing examples of generosity, cooperation, and love among them. I’ve emphasized primarily examples showing selfishness, competition, and aggression only because of the need to debunk the anarchoprimitivist myth that portrays the life of hunter-gatherers as a kind of politically-correct Garden of Eden.

In any case, when Colin Turnbull contrasts modern “competition,” “independence,” and reliance on “self” with “the well-trying primitive values of interdependence, cooperation, and reliance on community,” he simply makes a fool of himself. As we’ve already seen, the latter values are not particularly characteristic of primitive societies. And a moment’s thought shows that in modern society self-reliance has become practically impossible, while cooperation and interdependence are developed to an infinitely greater degree than could ever be the case in a primitive society.

A modern nation is a vast, highly-organized system in which every part is dependent on every other part. The factories and oil refineries could not function without the electricity provided by power plants, the power plants need replacement parts produced in the factories, the factories require materials that could not be transported without the fuel provided by oil refineries. The factories, refineries, and power plants could not function without the workers. The workers need food produced on farms, the farms require fuel and spare parts for tractors and machinery, hence cannot do without the refineries and factories and so forth. And even a modern nation is no longer a self-sufficient unit. Increasingly, every country is dependent on the global economy. Since the modern individual could not survive without the goods and services provided by the worldwide technoindustrial machine, it is absurd today to speak of self-reliance. To keep the whole machine running, a vast, elaborately-choreographed system of cooperation is necessary. People have to arrive at their places of employment at precisely designated times, and do their work in accord with detailed rules and procedures in order to ensure that every individual’s performance meshes with everyone else’s. In order for traffic to flow smoothly and without accidents or congestion, people must cooperate by complying, with numerous traffic regulations. Appointments must be kept, taxes paid, licenses procured, laws obeyed, etc., etc., etc. There has never existed a primitive society that has had such a far-reaching and elaborate system of cooperation, or one that has regulated the behavior of the individual in such detail. Un-

³⁴⁰ Turnbull, *Wayward and Servants*, e.g., page 105.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pages 199–200 (footnote 5).

³⁴² *Ibid.*, page 113.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, page 153.

³⁴⁴ Poncins, page 237.

der these circumstances, the claim that modern society is characterized by “independence” and “self-reliance,” in opposition to primitive “interdependence” and “cooperation,” appears bizarre.

It might be answered that modern people cooperate with the system only because they are forced to do so, whereas at least part of primitive man’s cooperation is more or less voluntary. This of course is true, and the reason for it is clear. Precisely because our system of cooperation is so highly developed, it is exceedingly demanding and therefore so burdensome to the individual that few people would comply with it if they didn’t fear losing their jobs, paying a fine, or going to jail. Primitive man’s cooperation can be partly voluntary for the very reason that far less cooperation is required of primitive man than of modern man. What gives modern society a superficial appearance of individualism, independence, and self-reliance is the vanishing of the ties that formerly linked individuals into small-scale communities. Today, nuclear families commonly have little connection to their next-door neighbors or even to their cousins. Most people have friends, but friends nowadays tend to use each other only for entertainment. They do not usually cooperate in economic or other serious, practical activities, nor do they offer each other much physical or economic security. If you become disabled, you don’t expect your friends to support you. You depend on insurance or on the welfare department. But the ties of cooperation and mutual assistance that once bound the hunter-gatherer to his band have not simply vanished into thin air. They have been replaced by ties that bind us to the technoindustrial system as a whole, and bind us much more tightly than the hunter-gatherer was bound to his band. It is absurd to say that a person is independent, self-reliant, or an individualist because he belongs to a collectivity of hundreds of millions of people rather than to one of thirty or fifty people. As for competition, it is more firmly leashed in our society than it was in most primitive societies. As we’ve seen, two Mbuti women might compete for a man with their fists; they might compete for food by filching some or by having a shouting match over the division of meat. Australian Aboriginal men fought over women with deadly weapons.³⁴⁵ But such direct and unrestrained competition cannot be tolerated in modern society because it would disrupt the elaborate and finely-tuned system of cooperation. So our society has developed outlets for the competitive impulse that are harmless, or even useful, to the system. Men today do not compete for women, or vice versa, by fighting. Men compete for women by earning money and driving prestigious cars; women compete for men by cultivating charm and appearance. Corporation executives compete by striving for promotions. In this context, competition among the executives is a device that encourages them to cooperate with the corporation, for the person who wins the promotion is the one who best serves the corporation. It could plausibly be argued that competitive sports in modern society function as an outlet for aggressive and competitive impulses that would have serious disruptive consequences if they were expressed in the way that many primitive peoples express such impulses. Clearly, the system needs people who are cooperative, obedient, and willing to accept dependence. As the historian Von Laue puts it: “Industrial society, after all, requires an incredible docility at the base of its freedoms [sic].”³⁴⁶ For this reason, community, cooperation, and helping others have become deeply-ingrained, fundamental values of modern society. But what about the value supposedly placed on independence, individualism, and competition? Whereas the words “community”, “cooperation”, and “helping” in our society are unequivocally accepted as “good”, the words “individualism” and “competition” are tense, two-edged words

³⁴⁵ Coon, page 260.

³⁴⁶ Van Laue, page 202.

that must be used with some care if one wishes to avoid risk of a negative reaction. To illustrate with an anecdote, when I was in the seventh or eighth grade our teacher, who was apt to be somewhat rough with the kids, asked a girl to name the country that she lived in. The girl was not very bright and apparently did not know the full name of the United States of America, so she answered simply: "The States". "The United States of what?" asked the teacher. The girl just sat there with a blank expression. The teacher kept badgering her for an answer until she ventured a guess: "The States of Community?".

Why "community"? Because of course "community" was a goody-goody word, the kind of word that a kid would use to get brownie points with a teacher. Would any kid in a similar situation have answered "United States of Competition" or "United States of Individualism"? Not likely!

It is routinely taken for granted that words like "community," "cooperation," "helping," and "sharing" represent something positive, but "individualism" is seldom used in the mainstream media or in the educational system in an unequivocally positive sense. "Competition" is more often used in a positive sense, but typically it is used that way only in specific contexts in which competition is useful (or at least harmless) to the system. For example, competition is considered desirable in the business world because it weeds out inefficient companies, spurs other companies to become more efficient, and promotes economic and technological progress. But only leashed competition — that is, competition that abides by rules designed to make it harmless or useful — is commonly spoken of favorably. And, when treated in a positive sense, competition is always justified in terms of communitarian values. Thus, business competition is considered good because it promotes efficiency and progress, which supposedly are good for the community as a whole. "Independence," too, is a "good" word only when used in certain ways. For example, when one speaks of making disabled people "independent" one never thinks of making them independent of the system. One means only that they are to be provided with gainful employment so that the community will not be burdened with the cost of supporting them. Once they have found a job they are every bit as dependent on the system as they were when they lived on welfare, and they have a great deal less freedom to decide how to spend their time. So why do politically-correct anthropologists and others like them contrast the supposedly primitive values of "community," "cooperation," "sharing," and "interdependence" with what they claim are the modern values of "competition," "individualism" and "independence"? Certainly an important part of the answer is that politically-correct people have absorbed too well the values that the system's propaganda has taught them, including the values of "cooperation," "community," "helping," and so forth. Another value they have absorbed from propaganda is that of "tolerance," which in cross-cultural contexts tends to translate into condescending approval of non-Western cultures. A well-socialized modern anthropologist is therefore faced with a conflict: Since he is supposed to be tolerant, he finds it difficult to say anything bad about primitive cultures. But primitive cultures provide abundant examples of behavior that is decidedly bad from the point of view of modern Western values. So the anthropologist has to censor much of the "bad" behavior out of his descriptions of primitive cultures in order to avoid showing them in a negative light. In addition, due to his own excessively thorough socialization, the politically-correct anthropologist has a need to rebel.³⁴⁷ He is too well socialized to discard the fundamental values

³⁴⁷ For discussion of this and some of the other psychological points made in this paragraph, see the Unabomber Manifesto, "Industrial Society and Its Future", paragraphs 6–32, 213–230.

of modern society, so he expresses his hostility toward that society by distorting facts to make it seem that modern society deviates from its own stated values to a much greater extent than it actually does. Thus the anthropologist ends by magnifying the competitive and individualistic aspects of modern society while grossly understating these aspects of primitive societies.

There's more to it than that, of course, and I can't claim to understand fully the psychology of these people. It seems obvious, for example, that the politically-correct portrayal of hunter-gatherers is motivated in part by an impulse to construct an image of a pure and innocent world existing at the dawn of time, analogous to the Garden of Eden, but the basis of this impulse is not clear to me.

8. What about hunter-gatherers' relations with animals? Some anarchoprimitivists seem to think that animals and humans once "coexisted" and that although animals nowadays sometimes eat humans, "such attacks by animals are comparatively rare," and "these animals are short of food due to the encroachment of civilization and are acting more out of extreme hunger and desperation. It is also due to our ignorance of the animal's gestures and scents, despoiled foliage or other signals our ancestor's [sic] knew but our domestication has now denied us."³⁴⁸ It is certainly true that the hunter-gatherer's knowledge of animals' habits made him safer in the wilderness than a modern man would be. It is also true that attacks on humans by wild animals are and have been relatively infrequent, probably because animals have learned the hard way that it is risky to prey on humans. But to hunter-gatherers in many environments wild animals did represent a significant danger. The Siriono hunter was "occasionally exposed to attacks from jaguars, crocodiles, and poisonous snakes."³⁴⁹ Leopards, forest buffalo, and crocodiles were a real threat to the Mbuti.³⁵⁰ On the other hand, remarkably, the Kadar (hunter-gatherers of India) were said to have "a truce with tigers, which in the old days left them strictly alone."³⁵¹ This is the only case of the kind that I know of. Hunter-gatherers represented a much greater danger to animals than vice versa, since of course they hunted animals for food. Even the Kadar, who had no hunting weapons and lived mainly on wild yams, occasionally used their digging sticks to kill small animals for food.³⁵² Hunting methods could be cruel. Mbuti pygmies would stab an elephant in the belly with a poisoned spear; the animal would then die of peritonitis (inflammation of the abdominal lining) during the next 24 hours.³⁵³ The Bushmen shot game with poisoned arrows, and the animals died slowly over a period that could be as long as three days.³⁵⁴ Prehistoric hunter-gatherers slaughtered animals on a mass basis by driving herds over cliffs or bluffs.³⁵⁵ The process was fairly gruesome and presumably was painful to the animals, since some of them were not killed outright by their fall but only disabled. The Indian Wooden Leg said: "I have helped in the chasing of antelope bands over a cliff. Many of them were killed or got broken legs.

³⁴⁸ "The Forgotten Language Among Humans and Nature", *Species Traitor*, Issue 2, Winter 2002. Pages in this publication are not numbered.

³⁴⁹ Holmberg, page 249. See also pages 61, 117, 260.

³⁵⁰ Turnbull, *Forest People*, pages 35, 58, 79, 179; *Wayward Servants*, pages 165, 168. Schebesta, I. Band, page 68. Coon, page 71.

³⁵¹ Coon, page 156.

³⁵² Ibid., pages 156, 158, 196.

³⁵³ Turnbull, *Change and Adaptation*, page 20; *Wayward Servants*, page 164. Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil, pages 107–111, describes other cruel methods of killing elephants.

³⁵⁴ Thomas, pages 94, 190.

³⁵⁵ Wissler, pages 14, 270. Coon, page 88.

We clubbed to death the injured ones.”³⁵⁶ This is not exactly the kind of thing that appeals to animal-rights activists. Anarchoprimitivists may want to claim that hunter-gatherers inflicted suffering on animals only to the extent that they had to do so in order to get meat. But this is not true. A good deal of hunter-gatherers’ cruelty was gratuitous. In *The Forest People*, Turnbull reported:

“The youngster had speared [the sindula] with his first thrust, pinning the animal to the ground through the fleshy part of the stomach. But the animal was still very much alive, fighting for freedom. Maïpe put another spear into its neck, but it still writhed and fought. Not until a third spear pierced its heart did it give up the struggle...

“The pygmies stood around in an excited group, pointing at the dying animal and laughing. One boy, about nine years old, threw himself on the ground and curled up in a grotesque heap and imitated the sindula’s last convulsions...

“At other times I have seen Pygmies singeing feathers off birds that were still alive, explaining that the meat is more tender if death comes slowly. And the hunting dogs, valuable as they are, get kicked around mercilessly from the day they are born to the day they die.”³⁵⁷

A few years later, in *Wayward Servants*, Turnbull wrote: “The moment of killing is best described as a moment of intense compassion and reverence. The fun that is sometimes subsequently made of the dead animal, particularly by the youths, appears to be almost a nervous reaction, and there is an element of fear in their behavior. On the other hand, a bird caught alive may deliberately be toyed with, its feathers singed off over the fire while it is still fluttering and squawking until it is finally burned or suffocated to death. This again is usually done by the youths who take the same nervous pleasure in the act; very rarely a young hunter may absent-mindedly [!] do the same thing. Older hunters and elders generally disapprove, but do not interfere.”; “The respect seems to be not for animal life but for the game as a gift of the forest...”³⁵⁸ This does not seem entirely consistent with what Turnbull reported earlier in *The Forest People*. Maybe Turnbull was already beginning to swing toward political correctness when he wrote *Wayward Servants*. But even if we take the statements of *Wayward Servants* at face value, the fact remains that the Mbuti did treat animals with unnecessary cruelty, whether or not they felt “compassion and reverence” for them. If the Mbuti did have compassion for animals, they were probably exceptional in that regard. Hunter-gatherers seem typically to be callous toward animals. The Eskimos with whom Gontran de Poncins lived kicked and beat their dogs brutally.³⁵⁹ The Siriono sometimes captured young animals alive and brought them back to camp, but they gave them nothing to eat, and the animals were treated so roughly by the children that they soon died.³⁶⁰ It should be noted that many hunting-and-gathering peoples did have a sense of reverence for or closeness to wild animals. I’ve already quoted Colin Turnbull’s statement

³⁵⁶ Marquis, page 88.

³⁵⁷ Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 101. Schebesta. II. Band, I. Teil, page 90, also states that the Mbuti kicked their hunting dogs.

³⁵⁸ Turnbull. *Wayward Servants*, page 161.

³⁵⁹ Poncins, pages 29, 30, 49, 189, 196, 198–99, 212, 216.

³⁶⁰ Holmberg, pages 69–70, 208.

to that effect in the case of the Mbuti. Coon states that “it is virtually a standard rule among hunters that they should never mock or otherwise insult any wild creature whose life they have brought to an end.”³⁶¹ (As the passages I’ve quoted from Turnbull show, there were exceptions to this “standard rule”.) Venturing into speculation, Coon adds that “hunters sense the unity of nature and the combination of humility and responsibility of their role in it.”³⁶² Wissler describes the closeness to and reverence toward nature (including wild animals) of the North American Indians.³⁶³ Holmberg mentions the Siriono’s “bonds” and “kinship” with the animal world.³⁶⁴ But, as we’ve already seen, these “bonds” and this “kinship” did not prevent physical cruelty to animals. Clearly, animal-rights activists would be horrified at the way hunter-gatherers often treated animals. For people who look to hunting and gathering cultures as their social ideal, it therefore makes no sense to maintain alliances with the animal-rights movement.

9. To mop up as it were, I’ll mention briefly a few other elements of the anarchoprimitivist myth. According to the myth, racism is an artifact of civilization. But it’s not clear that this is actually true. Of course, most primitive peoples couldn’t be racists, because they never came in contact with any member of a race different from their own. But where contacts between different races did occur, I’m not aware of any reason to believe that hunter-gatherers were less prone to racism than modern man is. The Mbuti pygmies were distinguishable from their village-dwelling neighbors not only by their shorter stature but also by their facial features and by the lighter color of their skin.³⁶⁵ The Mbuti referred to the villagers as “black savages” and “animals”, and did not consider them to be real people.³⁶⁶ The villagers similarly referred to the Mbuti as “savages” and “animals”, nor did they consider the Mbuti to be real people.³⁶⁷ It’s true that the villagers often took Mbuti wives, but this seems to have been only because their own women, in the forest environment, had very low fertility, whereas Mbuti women bore plenty of children.³⁶⁸ First-generation offspring of mixed marriages were considered inferior.³⁶⁹ (Worth noting is that while Mbuti women often married villagers and lived in the villages, villager women hardly ever married Mbuti men, because the women “shunned the hard Gypsy life of the forest nomads and preferred the settled village life.”³⁷⁰ Moreover, the mixed-blood offspring of Mbuti-villager unions usually remained in the villages and “only rarely found their way back to the forest, because they preferred the more comfortable village life to the tough life of the forest.”³⁷¹ This is hardly consistent with the anarchoprimitivists’ image of the hunter-gatherer’s life as one of ease and plenty.) In the foregoing case of mutual racial antagonism only one side — the Mbuti — consisted of hunter-gatherers, the villagers being cultivators of crops. For a possible example of racism in which both sides were hunter-gatherers, the Indians of the North American sub-

³⁶¹ Coon, page 119.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Wissler, pages 124, 304–06.

³⁶⁴ Holmberg, pages 111, 195.

³⁶⁵ Turnbull, *Forest People*, pages 14, 33. Schebesta, I. Band, passim, e.g., pages 107, 181–84, 355.

³⁶⁶ Turnbull, *Forest People*, pages 47, 120, 167; *Wayward Servants*, pages 61, 82; *Change and Adaptation*, page 92.

³⁶⁷ Turnbull, *Forest People*, pages 47, 234.

³⁶⁸ Schebesta, I. Band, pages 106–07, 137.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., page 107.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., page 108.

³⁷¹ Ibid., page 110.

arctic and the Eskimos hated and feared one another; they seldom met except to fight.³⁷² How about homophobia? That wasn't unknown among hunter-gatherers either. According to Mrs. Thomas, homosexuality was not permitted among the Bushmen whom she knew³⁷³ (though it does not necessarily follow that this was true of all Bushman groups). Among the Mbuti, according to Turnbull, "homosexuality is never alluded to except as a great insult, under the most dire provocation."³⁷⁴

The publisher of the anarchoprimitivist "zine" *Species Traitor* stated in a letter to me that in hunter-gatherer cultures "people had no property."³⁷⁵ This is not true. Various forms of private property did exist among hunter-gatherers — and not only among sedentary ones like the Northwest Coast Indians. It is well known that most hunting-and-gathering peoples had collective property in land. That is, each band of 30 to 130 people owned the territory in which it lived. Coon provides an extended discussion of this.³⁷⁶ It is less well known that hunter-gatherers, even nomadic ones, could also hold rights to natural resources as individual property, and in some cases such rights could even be inherited.³⁷⁷ For example, among Mrs. Thomas's Bushmen: "Each group has a very specific territory which that group alone may use, and they respect their boundaries rigidly. If a person is born in a certain area he or she has a right to eat the melons that grow there and all the veld food. A man may eat the melons wherever his wife can and wherever his father and mother could, so that every Bushman has in this way some kind of rights in many places. Gai, for example, ate melons at Ai a ha'o because his wife's mother was born there, as well as at his own birthplace, the Okwa Omaramba."³⁷⁸

Among the Veddas (hunter-gatherers of Ceylon), "the band territory was subdivided for individual band members, who could pass their property on to their children."³⁷⁹ Among certain Australian Aborigines there existed a system of inherited rights to goods obtained in trade for stones extracted from a quarry.³⁸⁰ Among some other Australian Aborigines, certain fruit trees were privately owned.³⁸¹ The Mbuti used termites as food, and among them termite hills could be owned by individuals.³⁸² Portable items such as tools, clothing, and ornaments usually were owned by individual hunter-gatherers.³⁸³

Turnbull mentions the argument of one W. Nippold to the effect that hunter-gatherers, including the Mbuti, had a highly developed sense of private property. Turnbull counters that this is "debatable point, and largely a semantic problem."³⁸⁴ Here there is no need for us to split hairs about what does and what does not constitute private property, or what would be a "highly developed sense" of it. Suffice it to say that the unqualified belief that hunter-gatherers did not have private property is only another element of the anarchoprimitivist myth. It's important to

³⁷² Wissler, page 221. See also Poncins, page 165 (Eskimo kills two Indians), and Encycl. Brit., Vol. 13, article "American Peoples, Native", page 360 (subarctic Indians fight Eskimos).

³⁷³ Thomas, page 87.

³⁷⁴ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 122.

³⁷⁵ Letter to the author from publisher of *Species Traitor*, 4/7 /03, page 7.

³⁷⁶ Coon, pages 191–95.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., page 194.

³⁷⁸ Thomas, pages 10, 82–83. See also Cashdan, page 41.

³⁷⁹ Cashdan, page 41. See also Coon, page 198.

³⁸⁰ Coon, page 275.

³⁸¹ Ibid., page 168.

³⁸² Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil, pages 14, 21–22, 275–76.

³⁸³ Cashdan, page 40. See also *ibid.*, page 37, and Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil, pages 276–78.

³⁸⁴ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 199 (footnote 5).

note, however, that nomadic hunter-gatherers did not accumulate property to the extent of being able to use their wealth to dominate other people.³⁸⁵ The hunter-gatherer ordinarily had to carry all of his property on his own back whenever he shifted camp, or at best he had to carry it in a canoe or on a dog-sled or travois.³⁸⁶ By any of these means only a limited amount of property can be transported, hence an upper bound is imposed on the amount of property that a nomad can usefully accumulate.

Property in rights to natural resources does not need to be transported so in theory even a nomadic hunter-gatherer could accumulate an unlimited amount of that kind of property. But in practice I am not aware of any instance in which anyone belonging to a nomadic hunting-and-gathering band accumulated enough property in rights to natural resources to enable him to dominate other people by means of it. Under the conditions of the nomadic hunting-and-gathering life, it would obviously be very difficult for any individual to enforce an exclusive right to more natural resources than he could utilize personally. Given the absence of accumulated wealth among nomadic hunter-gatherers, it might be supposed that there would be no social hierarchies among the latter, but this is not quite true. Clearly there is not much room for social hierarchy in a nomadic band that contains at most 130 people (including children), and typically well under half that number. Moreover, some hunting-and-gathering peoples made a conscious, consistent, and apparently quite successful effort to prevent anyone from setting himself or herself up above the level of the others. For example, among the Mbuti, there were “no chiefs or councils of elders,”³⁸⁷ “Individual authority is unthinkable,”³⁸⁸ and “any attempt at the assumption of individual authority, or even of excessive influence, is sharply countered by ridicule or ostracism.”³⁸⁹ In fact, Turnbull emphasizes throughout his books the Mbuti’s zeal in opposing the assumption by anyone of an elevated status.³⁹⁰

The Indians of sub-arctic North America had no chiefs.³⁹¹ The Siriono did have chiefs, but: “The prerogatives of chieftainship are few. A chief makes suggestions as to migrations, hunting trips, etc., but these are not always followed by his tribesmen. As a mark of status, however, a chief always possesses more than one wife”; “While chiefs complain a great deal that other members of the band do not satisfy their obligations to them, little heed is paid to their requests”; “In general, however, chiefs fare better than other members of the band. Their requests more frequently bear fruit than those of others.”³⁹²

The Bushmen whom Mrs. Thomas knew “have no chiefs or kings, only headmen who in function are virtually indistinguishable from the people they lead, and sometimes a band will not even have a headman.”³⁹³ Richard Lee’s Kung Bushmen had no chiefs,³⁹⁴ and like the Mbuti they

³⁸⁵ See Coon, page 268. Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil, pages 8, 18, remarks on the Mbuti’s lack of interest in accumulating wealth.

³⁸⁶ See Coon, pages 57–67.

³⁸⁷ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 14.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, page 181.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, page 228.

³⁹⁰ Turnbull, *Forest People*, pages 110, 125; *Wayward Servants*, pages 27, 28, 42, 178–181, 183, 187, 256, 274, 294, 300. Schebesta, II. Band, I. Teil, page 8, says that the Mbuti lacked any inclination to be domineering (Herrschaft).

³⁹¹ *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 13, article “American Peoples, Native”, page 360.

³⁹² Holmberg, pages 148–49.

³⁹³ Thomas, page 10.

³⁹⁴ Coon, page 238.

made a conscious effort to prevent anyone from setting himself up above the others.³⁹⁵ However, some other Kung Bushmen did have chiefs or headmen, the headmanship was hereditary, and the headmen had real authority, for the “headman or chief decides who shall go where and when on collecting expeditions, because the timing of the yearly round is critical to ensure the food supply.”³⁹⁶ This is what Coon says about the Bushmen in the area of the Gautscha water hole, and since Mrs. Thomas knew these Bushmen,³⁹⁷ it’s not clear how one would reconcile Coon’s statement with her remark that “headmen in function are virtually indistinguishable from the people they lead.” I don’t have access to proper library facilities; I don’t even have a complete copy of Mrs. Thomas’s book, only photocopies of some pages, so I’ll have to leave this problem to any reader who may be sufficiently interested to take it up.

Be that as it may, in some parts of Australia there were “powerful chiefs, whom the settlers called kings. The king wore a very elaborate turban crown and was always carried on the shoulders of the men.”³⁹⁸ In Tasmania too there were “territorial chiefs of considerable power, and in some cases at least their office was hereditary.”³⁹⁹

Thus, while social stratification was absent or slight in many or most nomadic hunting-and-gathering societies, the sweeping assumption that all hierarchy was absent in all such societies is not true.

It is commonly assumed, and not only by anarchoprimitivists, that hunter-gatherers were good conservationists. On this subject I don’t have much information, but from what I do know it seems that hunter-gatherers had a mixed record as conservationists. The Mbuti look very good. Schebesta believed that they had voluntarily limited their population in order to avoid overburdening their natural resources⁴⁰⁰ (though, at least in the part of his work that I have read, he does not explain his grounds for this belief). According to Turnbull, “there is very definitely a strongly felt and stated urge to use every part of the animal, and never to kill more than is necessary for the band’s needs for the day. This in fact may be one reason why the Mbuti are so reluctant to kill an excess of game and preserve it for exchange with the villagers.”⁴⁰¹

Turnbull also states that “in the view of mammalogists such as Van Gelder the [Mbuti] hunters are indeed the finest conservationists any conservation-minded government could wish for.”⁴⁰² On the other hand, when Turnbull took an Mbuti named Kenge to visit a game preserve out on the plains, Kenge was told “that he would see more game than he had ever seen in the forest, but he was not to try and hunt any. Kenge could not understand this, because to his mind game is meant to be hunted.”⁴⁰³ According to Coon, the ethic of the Tikerarmiut Eskimos forbade them to trap more than four wolves, wolverines, foxes, or marmots on any one day. However, this ethic quickly broke down when white traders arrived and tempted the Tikerarmiut with trade goods that they could obtain in exchange for the pelts of the animals named.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁵ Bonvillain, pages 20–21.

³⁹⁶ Coon, page 210.

³⁹⁷ Thomas, e.g., pages 146–47, 199.

³⁹⁸ Coon, page 253.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., page 251.

⁴⁰⁰ Schebesta. I. Band, page 106.

⁴⁰¹ Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, page 161.

⁴⁰² Turnbull, *Change and Adaptation*, page 18.

⁴⁰³ Turnbull, *Forest People*, page 250.

⁴⁰⁴ Coon, page 104.

As soon as they acquired steel axes, the Siriono began destroying the wild fruit trees of their region because it was easier to harvest the fruit by cutting the tree down than by climbing it.⁴⁰⁵

It is well known that some hunter-gatherers intentionally set wildfires because they knew that burned-over land would produce more of the edible plants that they favored.⁴⁰⁶ I consider this practice recklessly destructive. It is believed that prehistoric hunter-gatherers, through over-hunting, caused or at least contributed to the extinction of some species of large mammals,⁴⁰⁷ though as far as I know this has never been definitely proved. The foregoing doesn't even scratch the surface of the question of conservation versus environmental recklessness on the part of hunter-gatherers. It's a question that deserves thorough investigation.

10. I can't generalize broadly since I've communicated personally with only a few anarchoprimitivists, but it's clear that the beliefs of at least some anarchoprimitivists are impervious to any facts that conflict with them. One can point out to these people any number of facts of the kind I've presented here and quote the words of writers who actually visited hunter-gatherers at a time when the latter were still relatively unspoiled, yet the true-believing anarchoprimitivist will always find rationalizations, no matter how strained, to discount all inconvenient facts and maintain his belief in the myth.

One is reminded of the response of fundamentalist Christians to any rational attack on their beliefs. Whatever facts one may point out, the fundamentalist will always find some argument, however far-fetched, to explain them away and justify his belief in the literal, word-for-word truth of the Bible. Actually, there is about anarchoprimitivism a distinct flavor of early Christianity. The anarchoprimitivists' hunting-and-gathering utopia corresponds to the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve lived in ease and without sin (Genesis 2). The invention of agriculture and civilization corresponds to the Fall: Adam and Eve ate fruit from the tree of knowledge (Genesis 3:6), were cast out of the Garden (Genesis 3:24), and thereafter had to earn their bread with the sweat of their brow by tilling the soil (Genesis 3: 19,23). They moreover lost gender equality, since Eve became subordinate to her husband (Genesis 3:16). The revolution that anarchoprimitivists hope will overthrow civilization corresponds to the Day of Judgment, the day of destruction on which Babylon will fall (Revelation 18:2). The return to primitive utopia corresponds to the arrival of the Kingdom of God, wherein "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Revelation 21:4).

Today's activists who risk their bodies by engaging in masochistic resistance tactics, such as chaining themselves across roads to prevent the passage of logging trucks, correspond to the Christian martyrs—the true believers who "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God" (Revelation 20:4). Veganism corresponds to the dietary restrictions of many religions, such as the Christian fast during Lent. Like anarchoprimitivists, the early Christians emphasized egalitarianism ("whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased", Matthew 23:12) and sharing ("distribution was made unto every man according as he had need", Acts 4:35). The psychological affinity between anarchoprimitivism and early Christianity does not augur well. As soon as the emperor Constantine gave the Christians an opportunity to become powerful

⁴⁰⁵ Hotmberg, pages 63–64. 268.

⁴⁰⁶ E.g., *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 14, article "Biosphere", pages 1191,1197; Mercader, pages 2, 235, 238, 241. 282. 306. 309. On other reckless use of fire, see Coon. page 6.

⁴⁰⁷ Mercader, page 233. *Encycl. Brit.*, Vol. 14, article "Biosphere", pages 1159, 1196; Vol. 23, article "Mammals", pages 435,448.

they sold out, and ever since then Christianity, more often than not, has served as a prop for the established powers.

11. In the present article I've been mainly concerned to debunk the anarchoprimitivist myth, and for that reason I've emphasized certain aspects of primitive societies that will be seen as negative from the standpoint of modern values. But there is another side to this coin: Nomadic hunting-and-gathering societies showed many traits that were highly attractive. Among other things, there is reason to believe that such societies were relatively free of the psychological problems that bedevil modern man, such as chronic stress, anxiety or frustration, depression, eating and sleep disorders, and so forth; that people in such societies, in certain critically important respects (though not in all respects) had far more personal autonomy than modern man does; and that hunter-gatherers were better satisfied with their way of life than modern man is with his.

Why does this matter? Because it shows that chronic stress, anxiety and frustration, depression, and so forth, are not inevitable parts of the human condition, but are disorders brought on by modern civilization. Nor is servitude an inevitable part of the human condition: The example of at least some nomadic hunter-gatherer shows that true freedom is possible. Even more important: Regardless of whether they were good conservationists or poor ones, primitive peoples were incapable of damaging their environment to anything remotely approaching the extent to which modern man is damaging his. Primitives simply didn't have the power to do that much damage. They may have used fire recklessly and they may have exterminated some species through overhunting, but they had no way to dam large rivers, to cover thousands of square miles of the Earth's surface with cities and pavement, or to produce the vast quantities of toxic chemicals and radioactive waste with which modern civilization threatens to ruin the world for good and all. Nor did primitives have any means of releasing the deadly-dangerous forces represented by genetic engineering and by the super-intelligent computers that may soon be developed. These are dangers that scare even the technophiles themselves.⁴⁰⁸ So I agree with the anarchoprimitivists that the advent of civilization was a great disaster and that the Industrial Revolution was an even greater one. I further agree that a revolution against modernity, and against civilization in general, is necessary. But you can't build an effective revolutionary movement out of soft-headed dreamers, lazies, and charlatans. You have to have tough-minded, realistic, practical people, and people of that kind don't need the anarchoprimitivists' mushy utopian myth.

Concluding Note

When I wrote this article I had only begun to read *II. Band, I. Teil* [vol. 2, part 1] of Schebesta's *Die Bambuti-Pygmiiien vom Ituri*. Since reading the latter, and owing to the nature of the discrepancies that I found between Turnbull's account and that of Schebesta, I've been forced to entertain serious doubts about the reliability of Turnbull's work on the Mbuti pygmies. I now suspect that Turnbull consciously or unconsciously slanted his description of the Mbuti to make them appear more attractive to modern leftish intellectuals like himself. However, I do not consider it necessary now to rewrite this article in such a way as to eliminate the reliance on Turnbull,

⁴⁰⁸ see Bill Joy, "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us", *Wired* magazine. April 2000; and *Our Final Century*, by the British Astronomer Royal, Sir Martin Rees.

because I've cited Turnbull mainly for information that makes the Mbuti appear unattractive, e.g., for their wife-beating, fighting, and quarreling over food. Given the nature of Turnbull's bias, it seems safe to assume that, if anything, he would have understated the amount of wife-beating, fighting, and quarreling that he observed. But I think it is only fair to warn the reader that where Turnbull ascribes attractive or politically correct traits to the Mbuti, a certain degree of skepticism may be in order. I would like to thank a number of people who sent me books, articles, or other information pertaining to primitive societies, and without whose help the present article could not have been written: Facundo Bermudez, Chris J., Maijorie Kennedy, Alex Obledo, Patrick Scardo, Kevin Tucker, John Zerzan, and six other people who perhaps would not want their names to be mentioned publicly. But most of all I want to thank the woman I love, who provided me with more useful information than anyone else did, including two volumes of Paul Schebesta's wonderful work on the Mbuti pygmies.

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Due to the fact that I am a prisoner and have no direct access to library facilities, the bibliographical information given in this list is in some instances incomplete. In most cases, however, I do not think this will lead to any serious difficulty in locating the works cited.

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Industrial Society and Its Future

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1995

Introduction

1. The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life expectancy of those of us who live in “advanced” countries, but they have destabilized society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world. The continued development of technology will worsen the situation. It will certainly subject human beings to greater indignities and inflict greater damage on the natural world, it will probably lead to greater social disruption and psychological suffering, and it may lead to increased physical suffering even in “advanced” countries.

2. The industrial-technological system may survive or it may break down. If it survives, it MAY eventually achieve a low level of physical and psychological suffering, but only after passing through a long and very painful period of adjustment and only at the cost of permanently reducing human beings and many other living organisms to engineered products and mere cogs in the social machine. Furthermore, if the system survives, the consequences will be inevitable: There is no way of reforming or modifying the system so as to prevent it from depriving people of dignity and autonomy.

3. If the system breaks down the consequences will still be very painful But the bigger the system grows the more disastrous the results of its breakdown will be, so if it is to break down it had best break down sooner rather than later.

4. We therefore advocate a revolution against the industrial system. This revolution may or may not make use of violence; it may be sudden or it may be a relatively gradual process spanning a few decades. We can't predict any of that. But we do outline in a very general way the measures that those who hate the industrial system should take in order to prepare the way for a revolution against that form of society. This is not to be a POLITICAL revolution. Its object will be to overthrow not governments but the economic and technological basis of the present society.

5. In this article we give attention to only some of the negative developments that have grown out of the industrial-technological system. Other such developments we mention only briefly or ignore altogether. This does not mean that we regard these other developments as unimportant. For practical reasons we have to confine our discussion to areas that have received insufficient public attention or in which we have something new to say. For example, since there are well-developed environmental and wilderness movements, we have written very little about environmental degradation or the destruction of wild nature, even though we consider these to be highly important.

The Psychology of Modern Leftism

6. Almost everyone will agree that we live in a deeply troubled society. One of the most widespread manifestations of the craziness of our world is leftism, so a discussion of the psychology of leftism can serve as an introduction to the discussion of the problems of modern society in general.

7. But what is leftism? During the first half of the 20th century leftism could have been practically identified with socialism. Today the movement is fragmented and it is not clear who can properly be called a leftist. When we speak of leftists in this article we have in mind mainly socialists, collectivists, “politically correct” types, feminists, gay and disability activists, animal rights activists and the like. But not everyone who is associated with one of these movements is a leftist. What we are trying to get at in discussing leftism is not so much a movement or an ideology as a psychological type, or rather a collection of related types. Thus, what we mean by “leftism” will emerge more clearly in the course of our discussion of leftist psychology. (Also, see paragraphs 227–230.)

8. Even so, our conception of leftism will remain a good deal less clear than we would wish, but there doesn’t seem to be any remedy for this. All we are trying to do here is indicate in a rough and approximate way the two psychological tendencies that we believe are the main driving force of modern leftism. We by no means claim to be telling the WHOLE truth about leftist psychology. Also, our discussion is meant to apply to modern leftism only. We leave open the question of the extent to which our discussion could be applied to the leftists of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

9. The two psychological tendencies that underlie modern leftism we call *feelings of inferiority* and *oversocialization*. Feelings of inferiority are characteristic of modern leftism as a whole, while oversocialization is characteristic only of a certain segment of modern leftism; but this segment is highly influential.

Feelings of Inferiority

10. By “feelings of inferiority” we mean not only inferiority feelings in the strict sense but a whole spectrum of related traits: low self-esteem, feelings of powerlessness, depressive tendencies, defeatism, guilt, self-hatred, etc. We argue that modern leftists tend to have some such feelings (possibly more or less repressed), and that these feelings are decisive in determining the direction of modern leftism.

11. When someone interprets as derogatory almost anything that is said about him (or about groups with whom he identifies), we conclude that he has inferiority feelings or low self-esteem. This tendency is pronounced among minority-rights activists, whether or not they belong to the minority groups whose rights they defend. They are hypersensitive about the words used to designate minorities and about anything that is said concerning minorities. The terms “Negro,” “oriental,” “handicapped,” or “chick” for an African, an Asian, a disabled person or a woman originally had no derogatory connotation. “Broad” and “chick” were merely the feminine equivalents of “guy,” “dude” or “fellow.” The negative connotations have been attached to these terms by the activists themselves. Some animal rights activists have gone so far as to reject the word “pet” and insist on its replacement by “animal companion.” Leftish anthropologists go to great lengths to avoid saying anything about primitive peoples that could conceivably be interpreted as negative. They want to replace the word “primitive” by “nonliterate.” They seem almost paranoid about anything that might suggest that any primitive culture is inferior to our own. (We do not mean to imply that primitive cultures ARE inferior to ours. We merely point out the hypersensitivity of leftist anthropologists.)

12. Those who are most sensitive about “politically incorrect” terminology are not the average black ghetto-dweller, Asian immigrant, abused woman or disabled person, but a minority of activists, many of whom do not even belong to any “oppressed” group but come from privileged strata of society. Political correctness has its stronghold among university professors, who have secure employment with comfortable salaries, and the majority of whom are heterosexual white males from middle to upper-class families.

13. Many leftists have an intense identification with the problems of groups that have an image of being weak (women), defeated (American Indians), repellent (homosexuals), or otherwise inferior. The leftists themselves feel that these groups are inferior. They would never admit to themselves that they have such feelings, but it is precisely because they do see these groups as inferior that they identify with their problems. (We do not mean to suggest that women, Indians, etc., ARE inferior; we are only making a point about leftist psychology.)

14. Feminists are desperately anxious to prove that women are as strong and as capable as men. Clearly they are nagged by a fear that women may NOT be as strong and as capable as men.

15. Leftists tend to hate anything that has an image of being strong, good and successful. They hate America, they hate Western civilization, they hate white males, they hate rationality. The reasons that leftists give for hating the West, etc., clearly do not correspond with their real

motives. They SAY they hate the West because it is warlike, imperialistic, sexist, ethnocentric and so forth, but where these same faults appear in socialist countries or in primitive cultures, the leftist finds excuses for them, or at best he GRUDGINGLY admits that they exist; whereas he ENTHUSIASTICALLY points out (and often greatly exaggerates) these faults where they appear in Western civilization. Thus it is clear that these faults are not the leftist's real motive for hating America and the West. He hates America and the West because they are strong and successful.

16. Words like "self-confidence," "self-reliance," "initiative," "enterprise," "optimism," etc., play little role in the liberal and leftist vocabulary. The leftist is anti-individualistic, pro-collectivist. He wants society to solve everyone's problems for them, satisfy everyone's needs for them, take care of them. He is not the sort of person who has an inner sense of confidence in his ability to solve his own problems and satisfy his own needs. The leftist is antagonistic to the concept of competition because, deep inside, he feels like a loser.

17. Art forms that appeal to modern leftish intellectuals tend to focus on sordidness, defeat and despair, or else they take an orgiastic tone, throwing off rational control as if there were no hope of accomplishing anything through rational calculation and all that was left was to immerse oneself in the sensations of the moment.

18. Modern leftish philosophers tend to dismiss reason, science, objective reality and to insist that everything is culturally relative. It is true that one can ask serious questions about the foundations of scientific knowledge and about how, if at all, the concept of objective reality can be defined. But it is obvious that modern leftish philosophers are not simply cool-headed logicians systematically analyzing the foundations of knowledge. They are deeply involved emotionally in their attack on truth and reality. They attack these concepts because of their own psychological needs. For one thing, their attack is an outlet for hostility, and, to the extent that it is successful, it satisfies the drive for power. More importantly, the leftist hates science and rationality because they classify certain beliefs as true (i.e., successful, superior) and other beliefs as false (i.e., failed, inferior). The leftist's feelings of inferiority run so deep that he cannot tolerate any classification of some things as successful or superior and other things as failed or inferior. This also underlies the rejection by many leftists of the concept of mental illness and of the utility of IQ tests. Leftists are antagonistic to genetic explanations of human abilities or behavior because such explanations tend to make some persons appear superior or inferior to others. Leftists prefer to give society the credit or blame for an individual's ability or lack of it. Thus if a person is "inferior" it is not his fault, but society's, because he has not been brought up properly.

19. The leftist is not typically the kind of person whose feelings of inferiority make him a braggart, an egotist, a bully, a self-promoter, a ruthless competitor. This kind of person has not wholly lost faith in himself. He has a deficit in his sense of power and self-worth, but he can still conceive of himself as having the capacity to be strong, and his efforts to make himself strong produce his unpleasant behavior.¹ But the leftist is too far gone for that. His feelings of inferiority are so ingrained that he cannot conceive of himself as individually strong and valuable. Hence the collectivism of the leftist. He can feel strong only as a member of a large organization or a mass movement with which he identifies himself.

20. Notice the masochistic tendency of leftist tactics. Leftists protest by lying down in front of vehicles, they intentionally provoke police or racists to abuse them, etc. These tactics may

¹ We are not asserting that all, or even most, bullies and ruthless competitors suffer from feelings of inferiority.

often be effective, but many leftists use them not as a means to an end but because they PREFER masochistic tactics. Self-hatred is a leftist trait.

21. Leftists may claim that their activism is motivated by compassion or by moral principles, and moral principle does play a role for the leftist of the oversocialized type. But compassion and moral principle cannot be the main motives for leftist activism. Hostility is too prominent a component of leftist behavior; so is the drive for power. Moreover, much leftist behavior is not rationally calculated to be of benefit to the people whom the leftists claim to be trying to help. For example, if one believes that affirmative action is good for black people, does it make sense to demand affirmative action in hostile or dogmatic terms? Obviously it would be more productive to take a diplomatic and conciliatory approach that would make at least verbal and symbolic concessions to white people who think that affirmative action discriminates against them. But leftist activists do not take such an approach because it would not satisfy their emotional needs. Helping black people is not their real goal. Instead, race problems serve as an excuse for them to express their own hostility and frustrated need for power. In doing so they actually harm black people, because the activists' hostile attitude toward the white majority tends to intensify race hatred.

22. If our society had no social problems at all, the leftists would have to INVENT problems in order to provide themselves with an excuse for making a fuss.

23. We emphasize that the foregoing does not pretend to be an accurate description of everyone who might be considered a leftist. It is only a rough indication of a general tendency of leftism.

Oversocialization

24. Psychologists use the term “socialization” to designate the process by which children are trained to think and act as society demands. A person is said to be well socialized if he believes in and obeys the moral code of his society and fits in well as a functioning part of that society. It may seem senseless to say that many leftists are oversocialized, since the leftist is perceived as a rebel. Nevertheless, the position can be defended. Many leftists are not such rebels as they seem.

25. The moral code of our society is so demanding that no one can think, feel and act in a completely moral way. For example, we are not supposed to hate anyone, yet almost everyone hates somebody at some time or other, whether he admits it to himself or not. Some people are so highly socialized that the attempt to think, feel and act morally imposes a severe burden on them. In order to avoid feelings of guilt, they continually have to deceive themselves about their own motives and find moral explanations for feelings and actions that in reality have a non-moral origin. We use the term “oversocialized” to describe such people.¹

26. Oversocialization can lead to low self-esteem, a sense of powerlessness, defeatism, guilt, etc. One of the most important means by which our society socializes children is by making them feel ashamed of behavior or speech that is contrary to society’s expectations. If this is overdone, or if a particular child is especially susceptible to such feelings, he ends by feeling ashamed of HIMSELF. Moreover the thought and the behavior of the over-socialized person are more restricted by society’s expectations than are those of the lightly socialized person. The majority of people engage in a significant amount of naughty behavior. They lie, they commit petty thefts, they break traffic laws, they goof off at work, they hate someone, they say spiteful things or they use some underhanded trick to get ahead of the other guy. The oversocialized person cannot do these things, or if he does do them he generates in himself a sense of shame and self-hatred. The oversocialized person cannot even experience, without guilt, thoughts or feelings that are contrary to the accepted morality; he cannot think “unclean” thoughts. And socialization is not just a matter of morality; we are socialized to conform to many norms of behavior that do not fall under the heading of morality. Thus the oversocialized person is kept on a psychological leash and spends his life running on rails that society has laid down for him. In many oversocialized people this results in a sense of constraint and powerlessness that can be a severe hardship. We suggest that oversocialization is among the more serious cruelties that human beings inflict on one another.

27. We argue that a very important and influential segment of the modern left is oversocialized and that their oversocialization is of great importance in determining the direction of modern leftism. Leftists of the oversocialized type tend to be intellectuals or members of the upper middle

¹ During the Victorian period many oversocialized people suffered from serious psychological problems as a result of repressing or trying to repress their sexual feelings. Freud apparently based his theories on people of this type. Today the focus of socialization has shifted from sex to aggression.

class. Notice that university intellectuals² constitute the most highly socialized segment of our society and also the most left-wing segment.

28. The leftist of the oversocialized type tries to get off his psychological leash and assert his autonomy by rebelling. But usually he is not strong enough to rebel against the most basic values of society. Generally speaking, the goals of today's leftists are NOT in conflict with the accepted morality. On the contrary, the left takes an accepted moral principle, adopts it as its own, and then accuses mainstream society of violating that principle. Examples: racial equality, equality of the sexes, helping poor people, peace as opposed to war, nonviolence generally, freedom of expression, kindness to animals. More fundamentally, the duty of the individual to serve society and the duty of society to take care of the individual. All these have been deeply rooted values of our society (or at least of its middle and upper classes³) for a long time. These values are explicitly or implicitly expressed or presupposed in most of the material presented to us by the mainstream communications media and the educational system. Leftists, especially those of the oversocialized type, usually do not rebel against these principles but justify their hostility to society by claiming (with some degree of truth) that society is not living up to these principles.

29. Here is an illustration of the way in which the oversocialized leftist shows his real attachment to the conventional attitudes of our society while pretending to be in rebellion against it. Many leftists push for affirmative action, for moving black people into high-prestige jobs, for improved education in black schools and more money for such schools; the way of life of the black "underclass" they regard as a social disgrace. They want to integrate the black man into the system, make him a business executive, a lawyer, a scientist just like upper middle-class white people. The leftists will reply that the last thing they want is to make the black man into a copy of the white man; instead, they want to preserve African-American culture. But in what does this preservation of African-American culture consist? It can hardly consist in anything more than eating black-style food, listening to black-style music, wearing black-style clothing and going to a black-style church or mosque. In other words, it can express itself only in superficial matters. In all ESSENTIAL respects most leftists of the oversocialized type want to make the black man conform to white middle-class ideals. They want to make him study technical subjects, become an executive or a scientist, spend his life climbing the status ladder to prove that black people are as good as white. They want to make black fathers "responsible," they want black gangs to become nonviolent, etc. But these are exactly the values of the industrial-technological system. The system couldn't care less what kind of music a man listens to, what kind of clothes he wears or what religion he believes in as long as he studies in school, holds a respectable job, climbs the

² Not necessarily including specialists in engineering or the "hard" sciences.

³ There are many individuals of the middle and upper classes who resist some of these values, but usually their resistance is more or less covert. Such resistance appears in the mass media only to a very limited extent. The main thrust of propaganda in our society is in favor of the stated values. The main reason why these values have become, so to speak, the official values of our society is that they are useful to the industrial system. Violence is discouraged because it disrupts the functioning of the system. Racism is discouraged because ethnic conflicts also disrupt the system, and discrimination wastes the talents of minority-group members who could be useful to the system. Poverty must be "cured" because the underclass causes problems for the system and contact with the underclass lowers the morale of the other classes. Women are encouraged to have careers because their talents are useful to the system and, more importantly, because by having regular jobs women become integrated into the system and tied directly to it rather than to their families. This helps to weaken family solidarity. (The leaders of the system say they want to strengthen the family, but what they really mean is that they want the family to serve as an effective tool for socializing children in accord with the needs of the system. We argue in paragraphs 51,52.)

status ladder, is a “responsible” parent, is nonviolent and so forth. In effect, however much he may deny it, the oversocialized leftist wants to integrate the black man into the system and make him adopt its values.

30. We certainly do not claim that leftists, even of the over-socialized type, NEVER rebel against the fundamental values of our society. Clearly they sometimes do. Some oversocialized leftists have gone so far as to rebel against one of modern society’s most important principles by engaging in physical violence. By their own account, violence is for them a form of “liberation.” In other words, by committing violence they break through the psychological restraints that have been trained into them. Because they are oversocialized these restraints have been more confining for them than for others; hence their need to break free of them. But they usually justify their rebellion in terms of mainstream values. If they engage in violence they claim to be fighting against racism or the like.

31. We realize that many objections could be raised to the foregoing thumbnail sketch of leftist psychology. The real situation is complex, and anything like a complete description of it would take several volumes even if the necessary data were available. We claim only to have indicated very roughly the two most important tendencies in the psychology of modern leftism.

32. The problems of the leftist are indicative of the problems of our society as a whole. Low self-esteem, depressive tendencies and defeatism are not restricted to the left. Though they are especially noticeable in the left, they are widespread in our society. And today’s society tries to socialize us to a greater extent than any previous society. We are even told by experts how to eat, how to exercise, how to make love, how to raise our kids and so forth.

The Power Process

33. Human beings have a need (probably based in biology) for something that we will call the power process. This is closely related to the need for power (which is widely recognized) but is not quite the same thing. The power process has four elements. The three most clear-cut of these we call goal, effort and attainment of goal. (Everyone needs to have goals whose attainment requires effort, and needs to succeed in attaining at least some of his goals.) The fourth element is more difficult to define and may not be necessary for everyone. We call it autonomy and will discuss it later (paragraphs 42–44).

34. Consider the hypothetical case of a man who can have anything he wants just by wishing for it. Such a man has power, but he will develop serious psychological problems. At first he will have a lot of fun, but by and by he will become acutely bored and demoralized. Eventually he may become clinically depressed. History shows that leisured aristocracies tend to become decadent. This is not true of fighting aristocracies that have to struggle to maintain their power. But leisured, secure aristocracies that have no need to exert themselves usually become bored, hedonistic and demoralized, even though they have power. This shows that power is not enough. One must have goals toward which to exercise one's power.

35. Everyone has goals; if nothing else, to obtain the physical necessities of life: food, water and whatever clothing and shelter are made necessary by the climate. But the leisured aristocrat obtains these things without effort. Hence his boredom and demoralization.

36. Non-attainment of important goals results in death if the goals are physical necessities, and in frustration if non-attainment of the goals is compatible with survival. Consistent failure to attain goals throughout life results in defeatism, low self-esteem or depression.

37. Thus, in order to avoid serious psychological problems, a human being needs goals whose attainment requires effort, and he must have a reasonable rate of success in attaining his goals.

Surrogate Activities

38. But not every leisured aristocrat becomes bored and demoralized. For example, the emperor Hirohito, instead of sinking into decadent hedonism, devoted himself to marine biology, a field in which he became distinguished. When people do not have to exert themselves to satisfy their physical needs they often set up artificial goals for themselves. In many cases they then pursue these goals with the same energy and emotional involvement that they otherwise would have put into the search for physical necessities. Thus the aristocrats of the Roman Empire had their literary pretensions; many European aristocrats a few centuries ago invested tremendous time and energy in hunting, though they certainly didn't need the meat; other aristocracies have competed for status through elaborate displays of wealth; and a few aristocrats, like Hirohito, have turned to science.

39. We use the term "surrogate activity" to designate an activity that is directed toward an artificial goal that people set up for themselves merely in order to have some goal to work toward, or, let us say, merely for the sake of the "fulfillment" that they get from pursuing the goal. Here is a rule of thumb for the identification of surrogate activities. Given a person who devotes much time and energy to the pursuit of goal X, ask yourself this: If he had to devote most of his time and energy to satisfying his biological needs, and if that effort required him to use his physical and mental faculties in a varied and interesting way, would he feel seriously deprived because he did not attain goal X? If the answer is no, then the person's pursuit of a goal X is a surrogate activity. Hirohito's studies in marine biology clearly constituted a surrogate activity, since it is pretty certain that if Hirohito had had to spend his time working at interesting non-scientific tasks in order to obtain the necessities of life, he would not have felt deprived because he didn't know all about the anatomy and life-cycles of marine animals. On the other hand the pursuit of sex and love (for example) is not a surrogate activity, because most people, even if their existence were otherwise satisfactory, would feel deprived if they passed their lives without ever having a relationship with a member of the opposite sex. (But pursuit of an excessive amount of sex, more than one really needs, can be a surrogate activity.)

40. In modern industrial society only minimal effort is necessary to satisfy one's physical needs. It is enough to go through a training program to acquire some petty technical skill, then come to work on time and exert the very modest effort needed to hold a job. The only requirements are a moderate amount of intelligence and, most of all, simple OBEDIENCE. If one has those, society takes care of one from cradle to grave. (Yes, there is an underclass that cannot take the physical necessities for granted, but we are speaking here of mainstream society.) Thus it is not surprising that modern society is full of surrogate activities. These include scientific work, athletic achievement, humanitarian work, artistic and literary creation, climbing the corporate ladder, acquisition of money and material goods far beyond the point at which they cease to give any additional physical satisfaction, and social activism when it addresses issues that are not important for the activist personally, as in the case of white activists who work for the rights of nonwhite minorities. These are not always PURE surrogate activities, since for many people they

may be motivated in part by needs other than the need to have some goal to pursue. Scientific work may be motivated in part by a drive for prestige, artistic creation by a need to express feelings, militant social activism by hostility. But for most people who pursue them, these activities are in large part surrogate activities. For example, the majority of scientists will probably agree that the “fulfillment” they get from their work is more important than the money and prestige they earn.

41. For many if not most people, surrogate activities are less satisfying than the pursuit of real goals (that is, goals that people would want to attain even if their need for the power process were already fulfilled). One indication of this is the fact that, in many or most cases, people who are deeply involved in surrogate activities are never satisfied, never at rest. Thus the money-maker constantly strives for more and more wealth. The scientist no sooner solves one problem than he moves on to the next. The long-distance runner drives himself to run always farther and faster. Many people who pursue surrogate activities will say that they get far more fulfillment from these activities than they do from the “mundane” business of satisfying their biological needs, but that is because in our society the effort required to satisfy the biological needs has been reduced to triviality. More importantly, in our society people do not satisfy their biological needs AUTONOMOUSLY but by functioning as parts of an immense social machine. In contrast, people generally have a great deal of autonomy in pursuing their surrogate activities.

Autonomy

42. Autonomy as a part of the power process may not be necessary for every individual. But most people need a greater or lesser degree of autonomy in working toward their goals. Their efforts must be undertaken on their own initiative and must be under their own direction and control. Yet most people do not have to exert this initiative, direction and control as single individuals. It is usually enough to act as a member of a SMALL group. Thus if half a dozen people discuss a goal among themselves and make a successful joint effort to attain that goal, their need for the power process will be served. But if they work under rigid orders handed down from above that leave them no room for autonomous decision and initiative, then their need for the power process will not be served. The same is true when decisions are made on a collective basis if the group making the collective decision is so large that the role of each individual is insignificant.¹

43. It is true that some individuals seem to have little need for autonomy. Either their drive for power is weak or they satisfy it by identifying themselves with some powerful organization to which they belong. And then there are unthinking, animal types who seem to be satisfied with a purely physical sense of power (the good combat soldier, who gets his sense of power by developing fighting skills that he is quite content to use in blind obedience to his superiors).

44. But for most people it is through the power process—having a goal, making an AUTONOMOUS effort and attaining the goal—that self-esteem, self-confidence and a sense of power are acquired. When one does not have adequate opportunity to go through the power process the consequences are (depending on the individual and on the way the power process is disrupted) boredom, demoralization, low self-esteem, inferiority feelings, defeatism, depression, anxiety, guilt, frustration, hostility, spouse or child abuse, insatiable hedonism, abnormal sexual behavior, sleep disorders, eating disorders, etc.²

¹ It may be argued that the majority of people don't want to make their own decisions but want leaders to do their thinking for them. There is an element of truth in this. People like to make their own decisions in small matters, but making decisions on difficult, fundamental questions requires facing up to psychological conflict, and most people hate psychological conflict. Hence they tend to lean on others in making difficult decisions. But it does not follow that they like to have decisions imposed on them without having any opportunity to influence those decisions. The majority of people are natural followers, not leaders, but they like to have direct personal access to their leaders, they want to be able to influence the leaders and participate to some extent in making even the difficult decisions. At least to that degree they need autonomy.

² Some of the symptoms listed are similar to those shown by caged animals. To explain how these symptoms arise from deprivation with respect to the power process: common-sense understanding of human nature tells one that lack of goals whose attainment requires effort leads to boredom and that boredom, long continued, often leads eventually to depression. Failure to attain goals leads to frustration and lowering of self-esteem. Frustration leads to anger, anger to aggression, often in the form of spouse or child abuse. It has been shown that long-continued frustration commonly leads to depression and that depression tends to cause anxiety, guilt, sleep disorders, eating disorders and bad feelings about oneself. Those who are tending toward depression seek pleasure as an antidote; hence insatiable hedonism and excessive sex, with perversions as a means of getting new kicks. Boredom too tends to cause excessive pleasure-seeking since, lacking other goals, people often use pleasure as a goal. The foregoing is a simplification. Reality is more complex, and of course deprivation with respect to the power process is not the ONLY cause of the symptoms described. By the way, when we mention depression we do not necessarily mean depression

that is severe enough to be treated by a psychiatrist. Often only mild forms of depression are involved. And when we speak of goals we do not necessarily mean long-term, thought-out goals. For many or most people through much of human history, the goals of a hand-to-mouth existence (merely providing oneself and one's family with food from day to day) have been quite sufficient.

Sources of Social Problems

45. Any of the foregoing symptoms can occur in any society, but in modern industrial society they are present on a massive scale. We aren't the first to mention that the world today seems to be going crazy. This sort of thing is not normal for human societies. There is good reason to believe that primitive man suffered from less stress and frustration and was better satisfied with his way of life than modern man is. It is true that not all was sweetness and light in primitive societies. Abuse of women was common among the Australian aborigines, transsexuality was fairly common among some of the American Indian tribes. But it does appear that GENERALLY SPEAKING the kinds of problems that we have listed in the preceding paragraph were far less common among primitive peoples than they are in modern society.

46. We attribute the social and psychological problems of modern society to the fact that that society requires people to live under conditions radically different from those under which the human race evolved and to behave in ways that conflict with the patterns of behavior that the human race developed while living under the earlier conditions. It is clear from what we have already written that we consider lack of opportunity to properly experience the power process as the most important of the abnormal conditions to which modern society subjects people. But it is not the only one. Before dealing with disruption of the power process as a source of social problems we will discuss some of the other sources.

47. Among the abnormal conditions present in modern industrial society are excessive density of population, isolation of man from nature, excessive rapidity of social change and the breakdown of natural small-scale communities such as the extended family, the village or the tribe.

48. It is well known that crowding increases stress and aggression. The degree of crowding that exists today and the isolation of man from nature are consequences of technological progress. All preindustrial societies were predominantly rural. The Industrial Revolution vastly increased the size of cities and the proportion of the population that lives in them, and modern agricultural technology has made it possible for the Earth to support a far denser population than it ever did before. (Also, technology exacerbates the effects of crowding because it puts increased disruptive powers in people's hands. For example, a variety of noise-making devices: power mowers, radios, motorcycles, etc. If the use of these devices is unrestricted, people who want peace and quiet are frustrated by the noise. If their use is restricted, people who use the devices are frustrated by the regulations. But if these machines had never been invented there would have been no conflict and no frustration generated by them.)

49. For primitive societies the natural world (which usually changes only slowly) provided a stable framework and therefore a sense of security. In the modern world it is human society that dominates nature rather than the other way around, and modern society changes very rapidly owing to technological change. Thus there is no stable framework.

50. The conservatives are fools: They whine about the decay of traditional values, yet they enthusiastically support technological progress and economic growth. Apparently it never occurs to them that you can't make rapid, drastic changes in the technology and the economy of

a society without causing rapid changes in all other aspects of the society as well, and that such rapid changes inevitably break down traditional values.

51. The breakdown of traditional values to some extent implies the breakdown of the bonds that hold together traditional small-scale social groups. The disintegration of small-scale social groups is also promoted by the fact that modern conditions often require or tempt individuals to move to new locations, separating themselves from their communities. Beyond that, a technological society HAS TO weaken family ties and local communities if it is to function efficiently. In modern society an individual's loyalty must be first to the system and only secondarily to a small-scale community, because if the internal loyalties of small-scale communities were stronger than loyalty to the system, such communities would pursue their own advantage at the expense of the system.

52. Suppose that a public official or a corporation executive appoints his cousin, his friend or his coreligionist to a position rather than appointing the person best qualified for the job. He has permitted personal loyalty to supersede his loyalty to the system, and that is "nepotism" or "discrimination," both of which are terrible sins in modern society. Would-be industrial societies that have done a poor job of subordinating personal or local loyalties to loyalty to the system are usually very inefficient. (Look at Latin America.) Thus an advanced industrial society can tolerate only those small-scale communities that are emasculated, tamed and made into tools of the system.¹

53. Crowding, rapid change and the breakdown of communities have been widely recognized as sources of social problems. But we do not believe they are enough to account for the extent of the problems that are seen today.

54. A few preindustrial cities were very large and crowded, yet their inhabitants do not seem to have suffered from psychological problems to the same extent as modern man. In America today there still are uncrowded rural areas, and we find there the same problems as in urban areas, though the problems tend to be less acute in the rural areas. Thus crowding does not seem to be the decisive factor.

55. On the growing edge of the American frontier during the 19th century, the mobility of the population probably broke down extended families and small-scale social groups to at least the same extent as these are broken down today. In fact, many nuclear families lived by choice in such isolation, having no neighbors within several miles, that they belonged to no community at all, yet they do not seem to have developed problems as a result.

56. Furthermore, change in American frontier society was very rapid and deep. A man might be born and raised in a log cabin, outside the reach of law and order and fed largely on wild

¹ A partial exception may be made for a few passive, inward-looking groups, such as the Amish, which have little effect on the wider society. Apart from these, some genuine small-scale communities do exist in America today. For instance, youth gangs and "cults." Everyone regards them as dangerous, and so they are, because the members of these groups are loyal primarily to one another rather than to the system, hence the system cannot control them. Or take the gypsies. The gypsies commonly get away with theft and fraud because their loyalties are such that they can always get other gypsies to give testimony that "proves" their innocence. Obviously the system would be in serious trouble if too many people belonged to such groups. Some of the early-20th-century Chinese thinkers who were concerned with modernizing China recognized the necessity of breaking down small-scale social groups such as the family: "[According to Sun Yat-Sen] the Chinese people needed a new surge of patriotism, which would lead to a transfer of loyalty from the family to the state... [according to Li Huang] traditional attachments, particularly to the family, had to be abandoned if nationalism were to develop in China" (Chester C. Tan, *Chinese Political Thought in the Twentieth century*, page 125, page 297).

meat; and by the time he arrived at old age he might be working at a regular job and living in an ordered community with effective law enforcement. This was a deeper change than that which typically occurs in the life of a modern individual, yet it does not seem to have led to psychological problems. In fact, 19th century American society had an optimistic and self-confident tone, quite unlike that of today's society.²

57. The difference, we argue, is that modern man has the sense (largely justified) that change is IMPOSED on him, whereas the 19th century frontiersman had the sense (also largely justified) that he created change himself, by his own choice. Thus a pioneer settled on a piece of land of his own choosing and made it into a farm through his own effort. In those days an entire country might have only a couple of hundred inhabitants and was a far more isolated and autonomous entity than a modern county is. Hence the pioneer farmer participated as a member of a relatively small group in the creation of a new, ordered community. One may well question whether the creation of this community was an improvement, but at any rate it satisfied the pioneer's need for the power process.

58. It would be possible to give other examples of societies in which there has been rapid change and/or lack of close community ties without the kind of massive behavioral aberration that is seen in today's industrial society. We contend that the most important cause of social and psychological problems in modern society is the fact that people have insufficient opportunity to go through the power process in a normal way. We don't mean to say that modern society is the only one in which the power process has been disrupted. Probably most if not all civilized societies have interfered with the power process to a greater or lesser extent. But in modern industrial society the problem has become particularly acute. Leftism, at least in its recent (mid- to late-20th century) form, is in part a symptom of deprivation with respect to the power process.

² Yes, we know that 19th-century America had its problems, and serious ones, but for the sake of brevity we have to express ourselves in simplified terms.

Disruption of the Power Process in Modern Society

59. We divide human drives into three groups: (1) those drives that can be satisfied with minimal effort; (2) those that can be satisfied but only at the cost of serious effort; (3) those that cannot be adequately satisfied no matter how much effort one makes. The power process is the process of satisfying the drives of the second group. The more drives there are in the third group, the more there is frustration, anger, eventually defeatism, depression, etc.

60. In modern industrial society natural human drives tend to be pushed into the first and third groups, and the second group tends to consist increasingly of artificially created drives.

61. In primitive societies, physical necessities generally fall into group 2: They can be obtained, but only at the cost of serious effort. But modern society tends to guarantee the physical necessities to everyone¹ in exchange for only minimal effort, hence physical needs are pushed into group 1. (There may be disagreement about whether the effort needed to hold a job is “minimal”; but usually, in lower- to middle-level jobs, whatever effort is required is merely that of OBEDIENCE. You sit or stand where you are told to sit or stand and do what you are told to do in the way you are told to do it. Seldom do you have to exert yourself seriously, and in any case you have hardly any autonomy in work, so that the need for the power process is not well served.)

62. Social needs, such as sex, love and status, often remain in group 2 in modern society, depending on the situation of the individual.² But, except for people who have a particularly strong drive for status, the effort required to fulfill the social drives is insufficient to satisfy adequately the need for the power process.

63. So certain artificial needs have been created that fall into group 2, hence serve the need for the power process. Advertising and marketing techniques have been developed that make many people feel they need things that their grandparents never desired or even dreamed of. It requires serious effort to earn enough money to satisfy these artificial needs, hence they fall into group 2. (But see paragraphs 80–82.) Modern man must satisfy his need for the power process

¹ We leave aside the “underclass.” We are speaking of the mainstream.

² Some social scientists, educators, “mental health” professionals and the like are doing their best to push the social drives into group 1 by trying to see to it that everyone has a satisfactory social life.

largely through pursuit of the artificial needs created by the advertising and marketing industry,³ and through surrogate activities.

64. It seems that for many people, maybe the majority, these artificial forms of the power process are insufficient. A theme that appears repeatedly in the writings of the social critics of the second half of the 20th century is the sense of purposelessness that afflicts many people in modern society. (This purposelessness is often called by other names such as “anomie” or “middle-class vacuity.”) We suggest that the so-called “identity crisis” is actually a search for a sense of purpose, often for commitment to a suitable surrogate activity. It may be that existentialism is in large part a response to the purposelessness of modern life.⁴ Very widespread in modern society is the search for “fulfillment.” But we think that for the majority of people an activity whose main goal is fulfillment (that is, a surrogate activity) does not bring completely satisfactory fulfillment. In other words, it does not fully satisfy the need for the power process. (See paragraph 41.) That need can be fully satisfied only through activities that have some external goal, such as physical necessities, sex, love, status, revenge, etc.

65. Moreover, where goals are pursued through earning money, climbing the status ladder or functioning as part of the system in some other way, most people are not in a position to pursue their goals AUTONOMOUSLY. Most workers are someone else’s employee and, as we pointed out in paragraph 61, must spend their days doing what they are told to do in the way they are told to do it. Even most people who are in business for themselves have only limited autonomy. It is a chronic complaint of small-business persons and entrepreneurs that their hands are tied by excessive government regulation. Some of these regulations are doubtless unnecessary, but for the most part government regulations are essential and inevitable parts of our extremely complex society. A large portion of small business today operates on the franchise system. It was reported in the Wall Street Journal a few years ago that many of the franchise-granting companies require applicants for franchises to take a personality test that is designed to EXCLUDE those who have creativity and initiative, because such persons are not sufficiently docile to go along obediently

³ Is the drive for endless material acquisition really an artificial creation of the advertising and marketing industry? Certainly there is no innate human drive for material acquisition. There have been many cultures in which people have desired little material wealth beyond what was necessary to satisfy their basic physical needs (Australian aborigines, traditional Mexican peasant culture, some African cultures). On the other hand there have also been many preindustrial cultures in which material acquisition has played an important role. So we can’t claim that today’s acquisition-oriented culture is exclusively a creation of the advertising and marketing industry. But it IS clear that the advertising and marketing industry has had an important part in creating that culture. The big corporations that spend millions on advertising wouldn’t be spending that kind of money without solid proof that they were getting it back in increased sales. One member of FC met a sales manager a couple of years ago who was frank enough to tell him, “Our job is to make people buy things they don’t want and don’t need.” He then described how an untrained novice could present people with the facts about a product and make no sales at all, while a trained and experienced professional salesman would make lots of sales to the same people. This shows that people are manipulated into buying things they don’t really want.

⁴ The problem of purposelessness seems to have become less serious during the last 15 years or so [this refers to the 15 years preceding 1995], because people now feel less secure physically and economically than they did earlier, and the need for security provides them with a goal. But purposelessness has been replaced by frustration over the difficulty of attaining security. We emphasize the problem of purposelessness because the liberals and leftists would wish to solve our social problems by having society guarantee everyone’s security; but if that could be done it would only bring back the problem of purposelessness. The real issue is not whether society provides well or poorly for people’s security; the trouble is that people are dependent on the system for their security rather than having it in their own hands. This, by the way, is part of the reason why some people get worked up about the right to bear arms; possession of a gun puts that aspect of their security in their own hands.

with the franchise system. This excludes from small business many of the people who most need autonomy.

66. Today people live more by virtue of what the system does FOR them or TO them than by virtue of what they do for themselves. And what they do for themselves is done more and more along channels laid down by the system. Opportunities tend to be those that the system provides, the opportunities must be exploited in accord with the rules and regulations⁵ and techniques prescribed by experts must be followed if there is to be a chance of success.

67. Thus the power process is disrupted in our society through a deficiency of real goals and a deficiency of autonomy in the pursuit of goals. But it is also disrupted because of those human drives that fall into group 3: the drives that one cannot adequately satisfy no matter how much effort one makes. One of these drives is the need for security. Our lives depend on decisions made by other people; we have no control over these decisions and usually we do not even know the people who make them. ("We live in a world in which relatively few people—maybe 500 or 1,000—make the important decisions," Philip B. Heymann of Harvard Law School, quoted by Anthony Lewis, *New York Times*, April 21, 1995.) Our lives depend on whether safety standards at a nuclear power plant are properly maintained; on how much pesticide is allowed to get into our food or how much pollution into our air; on how skillful (or incompetent) our doctor is; whether we lose or get a job may depend on decisions made by government economists or corporation executives; and so forth. Most individuals are not in a position to secure themselves against these threats to more than a very limited extent. The individual's search for security is therefore frustrated, which leads to a sense of powerlessness.

68. It may be objected that primitive man is physically less secure than modern man, as is shown by his shorter life expectancy; hence modern man suffers from less, not more than the amount of insecurity that is normal for human beings. But psychological security does not closely correspond with physical security. What makes us FEEL secure is not so much objective security as a sense of confidence in our ability to take care of ourselves. Primitive man, threatened by a fierce animal or by hunger, can fight in self-defense or travel in search of food. He has no certainty of success in these efforts, but he is by no means helpless against the things that threaten him. The modern individual on the other hand is threatened by many things against which he is helpless; nuclear accidents, carcinogens in food, environmental pollution, war, increasing taxes, invasion of his privacy by large organizations, nationwide social or economic phenomena that may disrupt his way of life.

69. It is true that primitive man is powerless against some of the things that threaten him; disease for example. But he can accept the risk of disease stoically. It is part of the nature of things, it is no one's fault, unless it is the fault of some imaginary, impersonal demon. But threats to the modern individual tend to be MAN-MADE. They are not the results of chance but are IMPOSED on him by other persons whose decisions he, as an individual, is unable to influence. Consequently he feels frustrated, humiliated and angry.

⁵ Conservatives' efforts to decrease the amount of government regulation are of little benefit to the average man. For one thing, only a fraction of the regulations can be eliminated because most regulations are necessary. For another thing, most of the deregulation affects business rather than the average individual, so that its main effect is to take power from the government and give it to private corporations. What this means for the average man is that government interference in his life is replaced by interference from big corporations, which may be permitted, for example, to dump more chemicals that get into his water supply and give him cancer. The conservatives are just taking the average man for a sucker, exploiting his resentment of Big Government to promote the power of Big Business.

70. Thus primitive man for the most part has his security in his own hands (either as an individual or as a member of a SMALL group), whereas the security of modern man is in the hands of persons or organizations that are too remote or too large for him to be able personally to influence them. So modern man's drive for security tends to fall into groups 1 and 3; in some areas (food, shelter, etc.) his security is assured at the cost of only trivial effort, whereas in other areas he CANNOT attain security. (The foregoing greatly simplifies the real situation, but it does indicate in a rough, general way how the condition of modern man differs from that of primitive man.)

71. People have many transitory drives or impulses that are necessarily frustrated in modern life, hence fall into group 3. One may become angry, but modern society cannot permit fighting. In many situations it does not even permit verbal aggression. When going somewhere one may be in a hurry, or one may be in a mood to travel slowly, but one generally has no choice but to move with the flow of traffic and obey the traffic signals. One may want to do one's work in a different way, but usually one can work only according to the rules laid down by one's employer. In many other ways as well, modern man is strapped down by a network of rules and regulations (explicit or implicit) that frustrate many of his impulses and thus interfere with the power process. Most of these regulations cannot be dispensed with, because they are necessary for the functioning of industrial society.

72. Modern society is in certain respects extremely permissive. In matters that are irrelevant to the functioning of the system we can generally do what we please. We can believe in any religion we like (as long as it does not encourage behavior that is dangerous to the system). We can go to bed with anyone we like (as long as we practice "safe sex"). We can do anything we like as long as it is UNIMPORTANT. But in all IMPORTANT matters the system tends increasingly to regulate our behavior.

73. Behavior is regulated not only through explicit rules and not only by the government. Control is often exercised through indirect coercion or through psychological pressure or manipulation, and by organizations other than the government, or by the system as a whole. Most large organizations use some form of propaganda⁶ to manipulate public attitudes or behavior. Propaganda is not limited to "commercials" and advertisements, and sometimes it is not even consciously intended as propaganda by the people who make it. For instance, the content of entertainment programming is a powerful form of propaganda. An example of indirect coercion: There is no law that says we have to go to work every day and follow our employer's orders. Legally there is nothing to prevent us from going to live in the wild like primitive people or from going into business for ourselves. But in practice there is very little wild country left, and there is room in the economy for only a limited number of small business owners. Hence most of us can survive only as someone else's employee.

74. We suggest that modern man's obsession with longevity, and with maintaining physical vigor and sexual attractiveness to an advanced age, is a symptom of unfulfillment resulting from deprivation with respect to the power process. The "mid-life crisis" also is such a symptom. So is the lack of interest in having children that is fairly common in modern society but almost unheard-of in primitive societies.

⁶ When someone approves of the purpose for which propaganda is being used in a given case, he generally calls it "education" or applies to it some similar euphemism. But propaganda is propaganda regardless of the purpose for which it is used.

75. In primitive societies life is a succession of stages. The needs and purposes of one stage having been fulfilled, there is no particular reluctance about passing on to the next stage. A young man goes through the power process by becoming a hunter, hunting not for sport or for fulfillment but to get meat that is necessary for food. (In young women the process is more complex, with greater emphasis on social power; we won't discuss that here.) This phase having been successfully passed through, the young man has no reluctance about settling down to the responsibilities of raising a family. (In contrast, some modern people indefinitely postpone having children because they are too busy seeking some kind of "fulfillment." We suggest that the fulfillment they need is adequate experience of the power process—with real goals instead of the artificial goals of surrogate activities.) Again, having successfully raised his children, going through the power process by providing them with the physical necessities, the primitive man feels that his work is done and he is prepared to accept old age (if he survives that long) and death. Many modern people, on the other hand, are disturbed by the prospect of physical deterioration and death, as is shown by the amount of effort they expend trying to maintain their physical condition, appearance and health. We argue that this is due to unfulfillment resulting from the fact that they have never put their physical powers to any practical use, have never gone through the power process using their bodies in a serious way. It is not the primitive man, who has used his body daily for practical purposes, who fears the deterioration of age, but the modern man, who has never had a practical use for his body beyond walking from his car to his house. It is the man whose need for the power process has been satisfied during his life who is best prepared to accept the end of that life.

76. In response to the arguments of this section someone will say, "Society must find a way to give people the opportunity to go through the power process." This won't work for those who need autonomy in the power process. For such people the value of the opportunity is destroyed by the very fact that society gives it to them. What they need is to find or make their own opportunities. As long as the system GIVES them their opportunities it still has them on a leash. To attain autonomy they must get off that leash.

How Some People Adjust

77. Not everyone in industrial-technological society suffers from psychological problems. Some people even profess to be quite satisfied with society as it is. We now discuss some of the reasons why people differ so greatly in their response to modern society.

78. First, there doubtless are innate differences in the strength of the drive for power. Individuals with a weak drive for power may have relatively little need to go through the power process, or at least relatively little need for autonomy in the power process. These are docile types who would have been happy as plantation darkies in the Old South. (We don't mean to sneer at the "plantation darkies" of the Old South. To their credit, most of the slaves were NOT content with their servitude. We do sneer at people who ARE content with servitude.)

79. Some people may have some exceptional drive, in pursuing which they satisfy their need for the power process. For example, those who have an unusually strong drive for social status may spend their whole lives climbing the status ladder without ever getting bored with that game.

80. People vary in their susceptibility to advertising and marketing techniques. Some people are so susceptible that, even if they make a great deal of money, they cannot satisfy their constant craving for the shiny new toys that the marketing industry dangles before their eyes. So they always feel hard-pressed financially even if their income is large, and their cravings are frustrated.

81. Some people have low susceptibility to advertising and marketing techniques. These are the people who aren't interested in money. Material acquisition does not serve their need for the power process.

82. People who have medium susceptibility to advertising and marketing techniques are able to earn enough money to satisfy their craving for goods and services, but only at the cost of serious effort (putting in overtime, taking a second job, earning promotions, etc.). Thus material acquisition serves their need for the power process. But it does not necessarily follow that their need is fully satisfied. They may have insufficient autonomy in the power process (their work may consist of following orders) and some of their drives may be frustrated (e.g., security, aggression). (We are guilty of oversimplification in paragraphs 80–82.)¹

¹ Is the drive for endless material acquisition really an artificial creation of the advertising and marketing industry? Certainly there is no innate human drive for material acquisition. There have been many cultures in which people have desired little material wealth beyond what was necessary to satisfy their basic physical needs (Australian aborigines, traditional Mexican peasant culture, some African cultures). On the other hand there have also been many preindustrial cultures in which material acquisition has played an important role. So we can't claim that today's acquisition-oriented culture is exclusively a creation of the advertising and marketing industry. But it IS clear that the advertising and marketing industry has had an important part in creating that culture. The big corporations that spend millions on advertising wouldn't be spending that kind of money without solid proof that they were getting it back in increased sales. One member of FC met a sales manager a couple of years ago who was frank enough to tell him, "Our job is to make people buy things they don't want and don't need." He then described how an untrained novice could present people with the facts about a product and make no sales at all, while a trained and experienced

83. Some people partly satisfy their need for power by identifying themselves with a powerful organization or mass movement. An individual lacking goals or power joins a movement or an organization, adopts its goals as his own, then works toward these goals. When some of the goals are attained, the individual, even though his personal efforts have played only an insignificant part in the attainment of the goals, feels (through his identification with the movement or organization) as if he had gone through the power process. This phenomenon was exploited by the Fascists, Nazis and Communists. Our society uses it too, though less crudely. Example: Manuel Noriega was an irritant to the U.S. (goal: punish Noriega). The U.S. invaded Panama (effort) and punished Noriega (attainment of goal). The U.S. went through the power process and many Americans, because of their identification with the U.S., experienced the power process vicariously. Hence the widespread public approval of the Panama invasion; it gave people a sense of power.² We see the same phenomenon in armies, corporations, political parties, humanitarian organizations, religious or ideological movements. In particular, leftist movements tend to attract people who are seeking to satisfy their need for power. But for most people identification with a large organization or a mass movement does not fully satisfy the need for power.

84. Another way in which people satisfy their need for the power process is through surrogate activities. As we explained in paragraphs 38–40, a surrogate activity is an activity that is directed toward an artificial goal that the individual pursues for the sake of the “fulfillment” that he gets from pursuing the goal, not because he needs to attain the goal itself. For instance, there is no practical motive for building enormous muscles, hitting a little white ball into a hole or acquiring a complete series of postage stamps. Yet many people in our society devote themselves with passion to bodybuilding, golf or stamp-collecting. Some people are more “other-directed” than others, and therefore will more readily attach importance to a surrogate activity simply because the people around them treat it as important or because society tells them it is important. That is why some people get very serious about essentially trivial activities such as sports, or bridge, or chess, or arcane scholarly pursuits, whereas others who are more clear-sighted never see these things as anything but the surrogate activities that they are, and consequently never attach enough importance to them to satisfy their need for the power process in that way. It only remains to point out that in many cases a person’s way of earning a living is also a surrogate activity. Not a PURE surrogate activity, since part of the motive for the activity is to gain the physical necessities and (for some people) social status and the luxuries that advertising makes them want. But many people put into their work far more effort than is necessary to earn whatever money and status they require,

85. In this section we have explained how many people in modern society do satisfy their need for the power process to a greater or lesser extent. But we think that for the majority of people the need for the power process is not fully satisfied. In the first place, those who have an insatiable drive for status, or who get firmly “hooked” on a surrogate activity, or who identify strongly enough with a movement or organization to satisfy their need for power in that way, are exceptional personalities. Others are not fully satisfied with surrogate activities or by identification with an organization. (See paragraphs 41.) In the second place, too much control is imposed by the system through explicit regulation or through socialization, which results in a

professional salesman would make lots of sales to the same people. This shows that people are manipulated into buying things they don’t really want.

² We are not expressing approval or disapproval of the Panama invasion. We only use it to illustrate a point.

deficiency of autonomy, and in frustration due to the impossibility of attaining certain goals and the necessity of restraining too many impulses.

86. But even if most people in industrial-technological society were well satisfied, we (FC) would still be opposed to that form of society, because (among other reasons) we consider it demeaning to fulfill one's need for the power process through surrogate activities or through identification with an organization, rather than through pursuit of real goals.

The Motives of Scientists

87. Science and technology provide the most important examples of surrogate activities. Some scientists claim that they are motivated by “curiosity” or by a desire to “benefit humanity.” But it is easy to see that neither of these can be the principal motive of most scientists. As for “curiosity,” that notion is simply absurd. Most scientists work on highly specialized problems that are not the object of any normal curiosity. For example, is an astronomer, a mathematician or an entomologist curious about the properties of isopropyltrimethylmethane? Of course not. Only a chemist is curious about such a thing, and he is curious about it only because chemistry is his surrogate activity. Is the chemist curious about the appropriate classification of a new species of beetle? No. That question is of interest only to the entomologist, and he is interested in it only because entomology is his surrogate activity. If the chemist and the entomologist had to exert themselves seriously to obtain the physical necessities, and if that effort exercised their abilities in an interesting way but in some nonscientific pursuit, then they wouldn’t give a damn about isopropyltrimethylmethane or the classification of beetles. Suppose that lack of funds for postgraduate education had led the chemist to become an insurance broker instead of a chemist. In that case he would have been very interested in insurance matters but would have cared nothing about isopropyltrimethylmethane. In any case it is not normal to put into the satisfaction of mere curiosity the amount of time and effort that scientists put into their work. The “curiosity” explanation for the scientists’ motive just doesn’t stand up.

88. The “benefit of humanity” explanation doesn’t work any better. Some scientific work has no conceivable relation to the welfare of the human race—most of archaeology or comparative linguistics for example. Some other areas of science present obviously dangerous possibilities. Yet scientists in these areas are just as enthusiastic about their work as those who develop vaccines or study air pollution. Consider the case of Dr. Edward Teller, who had an obvious emotional involvement in promoting nuclear power plants. Did this involvement stem from a desire to benefit humanity? If so, then why didn’t Dr. Teller get emotional about other “humanitarian” causes? If he was such a humanitarian then why did he help to develop the H-bomb? As with many other scientific achievements, it is very much open to question whether nuclear power plants actually do benefit humanity. Does the cheap electricity outweigh the accumulating waste and the risk of accidents? Dr. Teller saw only one side of the question. Clearly his emotional involvement with nuclear power arose not from a desire to “benefit humanity” but from the personal fulfillment he got from his work and from seeing it put to practical use.

89. The same is true of scientists generally. With possible rare exceptions, their motive is neither curiosity nor a desire to benefit humanity but the need to go through the power process: to have a goal (a scientific problem to solve), to make an effort (research) and to attain the goal (solution of the problem). Science is a surrogate activity because scientists work mainly for the fulfillment they get out of the work itself.

90. Of course, it’s not that simple. Other motives do play a role for many scientists. Money and status for example. Some scientists may be persons of the type who have an insatiable drive for

status (see paragraph 79) and this may provide much of the motivation for their work. No doubt the majority of scientists, like the majority of the general population, are more or less susceptible to advertising and marketing techniques and need money to satisfy their craving for goods and services. Thus science is not a PURE surrogate activity. But it is in large part a surrogate activity.

91. Also, science and technology constitute a powerful mass movement, and many scientists gratify their need for power through identification with this mass movement. (See paragraph 83.)

92. Thus science marches on blindly, without regard to the real welfare of the human race or to any other standard, obedient only to the psychological needs of the scientists and of the government officials and corporation executives who provide the funds for research.

The Nature of Freedom

93. We are going to argue that industrial-technological society cannot be reformed in such a way as to prevent it from progressively narrowing the sphere of human freedom. But because “freedom” is a word that can be interpreted in many ways, we must first make clear what kind of freedom we are concerned with.

94. By “freedom” we mean the opportunity to go through the power process, with real goals not the artificial goals of surrogate activities, and without interference, manipulation or supervision from anyone, especially from any large organization. Freedom means being in control (either as an individual or as a member of a SMALL group) of the life-and-death issues of one’s existence: food, clothing, shelter and defense against whatever threats there may be in one’s environment. Freedom means having power; not the power to control other people but the power to control the circumstances of one’s own life. One does not have freedom if anyone else (especially a large organization) has power over one, no matter how benevolently, tolerantly and permissively that power may be exercised. It is important not to confuse freedom with mere permissiveness (see paragraph 72).

95. It is said that we live in a free society because we have a certain number of constitutionally guaranteed rights. But these are not as important as they seem. The degree of personal freedom that exists in a society is determined more by the economic and technological structure of the society than by its laws or its form of government.¹ Most of the Indian nations of New England were monarchies, and many of the cities of the Italian Renaissance were controlled by dictators.

¹ When the American colonies were under British rule there were fewer and less effective legal guarantees of freedom than there were after the American Constitution went into effect, yet there was more personal freedom in preindustrial America, both before and after the War of Independence, than there was after the Industrial Revolution took hold in this country. We quote from *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, chapter 12 by Roger Lane, pages 476–478: “The progressive heightening of standards of propriety, and with it the increasing reliance on official law enforcement [in 19th-century America]...were common to the whole society... [T]he change in social behavior is so long term and so wide-spread as to suggest a connection with the most fundamental of contemporary social processes; that of industrial urbanization itself...Massachusetts in 1835 had a population of some 660,940, 81 percent rural, overwhelmingly preindustrial and native born. Its citizens were used to considerable personal freedom. Whether teamsters, farmers or artisans, they were all accustomed to setting their own schedules, and the nature of their work made them physically independent of each other...Individual problems, sins or even crimes, were not generally cause for wider social concern ...But the impact of the twin movements to the city and to the factory, both just gathering force in 1835, had a progressive effect on personal behavior throughout the 19th century and into the 20th. The factory demanded regularity of behavior, a life governed by obedience to the rhythms of clock and calendar, the demands of foreman and supervisor. In the city or town, the needs of living in closely packed neighborhoods inhibited many actions previously unobjectionable. Both blue- and white-collar employees in larger establishments were mutually dependent on their fellows; as one man’s work fit into another’s, so one man’s business was no longer his own. The results of the new organization of life and work were apparent by 1900, when some 76 percent of the 2,805,346 inhabitants of Massachusetts were classified as urbanites. Much violent or irregular behavior which had been tolerable in a casual, independent society was no longer acceptable in the more formalized, cooperative atmosphere of the later period...The move to the cities had, in short, produced a more tractable, more socialized, more ‘civilized’ generation than its predecessors.”

But in reading about these societies one gets the impression that they allowed far more personal freedom than our society does. In part this was because they lacked efficient mechanisms for enforcing the ruler's will: There were no modern, well-organized police forces, no rapid long-distance communications, no surveillance cameras, no dossiers of information about the lives of average citizens. Hence it was relatively easy to evade control.

96. As for our constitutional rights, consider for example that of freedom of the press. We certainly don't mean to knock that right; it is a very important tool for limiting concentration of political power and for keeping those who do have political power in line by publicly exposing any misbehavior on their part. But freedom of the press is of very little use to the average citizen as an individual. The mass media are mostly under the control of large organizations that are integrated into the system. Anyone who has a little money can have something printed, or can distribute it on the Internet or in some such way, but what he has to say will be swamped by the vast volume of material put out by the media, hence it will have no practical effect. To make an impression on society with words is therefore almost impossible for most individuals and small groups. Take us (FC) for example. If we had never done anything violent and had submitted the present writings to a publisher, they probably would not have been accepted. If they had been accepted and published, they probably would not have attracted many readers, because it's more fun to watch the entertainment put out by the media than to read a sober essay. Even if these writings had had many readers, most of these readers would soon have forgotten what they had read as their minds were flooded by the mass of material to which the media expose them. In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people.

97. Constitutional rights are useful up to a point, but they do not serve to guarantee much more than what might be called the bourgeois conception of freedom. According to the bourgeois conception, a "free" man is essentially an element of a social machine and has only a certain set of prescribed and delimited freedoms; freedoms that are designed to serve the needs of the social machine more than those of the individual. Thus the bourgeois's "free" man has economic freedom because that promotes growth and progress; he has freedom of the press because public criticism restrains misbehavior by political leaders; he has a right to a fair trial because imprisonment at the whim of the powerful would be bad for the system. This was clearly the attitude of Simón Bolívar. To him, people deserved liberty only if they used it to promote progress (progress as conceived by the bourgeois). Other bourgeois thinkers have taken a similar view of freedom as a mere means to collective ends. Chester C. Tan, *Chinese Political Thought in the Twentieth Century*, page 202, explains the philosophy of the Kuomintang leader Hu Han-Min: "An individual is granted rights because he is a member of society and his community life requires such rights. By community Hu meant the whole society or the nation." And on page 259 Tan states that according to Carsun Chang (Chang Chun-Mai, head of the State Socialist Party in China) freedom had to be used in the interest of the state and of the people as a whole. But what kind of freedom does one have if one can use it only as someone else prescribes? FC's conception of freedom is not that of Bolívar, Hu, Chang or other bourgeois theorists. The trouble with such theorists is that they have made the development and application of social theories their surrogate activity. Consequently the theories are designed to serve the needs of the theorists more than the needs of any people who may be unlucky enough to live in a society on which the theories are imposed.

98. One more point to be made in this section: It should not be assumed that a person has enough freedom just because he SAYS he has enough. Freedom is restricted in part by psycho-

logical controls of which people are unconscious, and moreover many people's ideas of what constitutes freedom are governed more by social convention than by their real needs. For example, it's likely that many leftists of the oversocialized type would say that most people, including themselves, are socialized too little rather than too much, yet the oversocialized leftist pays a heavy psychological price for his high level of socialization.

Some Principles of History

99. Think of history as being the sum of two components: an erratic component that consists of unpredictable events that follow no discernible pattern, and a regular component that consists of long-term historical trends. Here we are concerned with the long-term trends.

100. FIRST PRINCIPLE. If a SMALL change is made that affects a long-term historical trend, then the effect of that change will almost always be transitory—the trend will soon revert to its original state. (Example: A reform movement designed to clean up political corruption in a society rarely has more than a short-term effect; sooner or later the reformers relax and corruption creeps back in. The level of political corruption in a given society tends to remain constant, or to change only slowly with the evolution of the society. Normally, a political cleanup will be permanent only if accompanied by widespread social changes; a SMALL change in the society won't be enough.) If a small change in a long-term historical trend appears to be permanent, it is only because the change acts in the direction in which the trend is already moving, so that the trend is not altered but only pushed a step ahead.

101. The first principle is almost a tautology. If a trend were not stable with respect to small changes, it would wander at random rather than following a definite direction; in other words it would not be a long-term trend at all.

102. SECOND PRINCIPLE. If a change is made that is sufficiently large to alter permanently a long-term historical trend, then it will alter the society as a whole. In other words, a society is a system in which all parts are interrelated, and you can't permanently change any important part without changing all other parts as well.

103. THIRD PRINCIPLE. If a change is made that is large enough to alter permanently a long-term trend, then the consequences for the society as a whole cannot be predicted in advance. (Unless various other societies have passed through the same change and have all experienced the same consequences, in which case one can predict on empirical grounds that another society that passes through the same change will be likely to experience similar consequences.)

104. FOURTH PRINCIPLE. A new kind of society cannot be designed on paper. That is, you cannot plan out a new form of society in advance, then set it up and expect it to function as it was designed to do.

105. The third and fourth principles result from the complexity of human societies. A change in human behavior will affect the economy of a society and its physical environment; the economy will affect the environment and vice versa, and the changes in the economy and the environment will affect human behavior in complex, unpredictable ways; and so forth. The network of causes and effects is far too complex to be untangled and understood.

106. FIFTH PRINCIPLE. People do not consciously and rationally choose the form of their society. Societies develop through processes of social evolution that are not under rational human control.

107. The fifth principle is a consequence of the other four.

108. To illustrate: By the first principle, generally speaking an attempt at social reform either acts in the direction in which the society is developing anyway (so that it merely accelerates a change that would have occurred in any case) or else it has only a transitory effect, so that the society soon slips back into its old groove. To make a lasting change in the direction of development of any important aspect of a society, reform is insufficient and revolution is required. (A revolution does not necessarily involve an armed uprising or the overthrow of a government.) By the second principle, a revolution never changes only one aspect of a society, it changes the whole society; and by the third principle changes occur that were never expected or desired by the revolutionaries. By the fourth principle, when revolutionaries or utopians set up a new kind of society, it never works out as planned.

109. The American Revolution does not provide a counterexample. The American “Revolution” was not a revolution in our sense of the word, but a war of independence followed by a rather far-reaching political reform. The Founding Fathers did not change the direction of development of American society, nor did they aspire to do so. They only freed the development of American society from the retarding effect of British rule. Their political reform did not change any basic trend, but only pushed American political culture along its natural direction of development. British society, of which American society was an offshoot, had been moving for a long time in the direction of representative democracy. And prior to the War of Independence the Americans were already practicing a significant degree of representative democracy in the colonial assemblies. The political system established by the Constitution was modeled on the British system and on the colonial assemblies. With major alterations, to be sure—there is no doubt that the Founding Fathers took a very important step. But it was a step along the road that the English-speaking world was already traveling. The proof is that Britain and all of its colonies that were populated predominantly by people of British descent ended up with systems of representative democracy essentially similar to that of the United States. If the Founding Fathers had lost their nerve and declined to sign the Declaration of Independence, our way of life today would not have been significantly different. Maybe we would have had somewhat closer ties to Britain, and would have had a Parliament and Prime Minister instead of a Congress and President. No big deal. Thus the American Revolution provides not a counterexample to our principles but a good illustration of them.

110. Still, one has to use common sense in applying the principles. They are expressed in imprecise language that allows latitude for interpretation, and exceptions to them can be found. So we present these principles not as inviolable laws but as rules of thumb, or guides to thinking, that may provide a partial antidote to naive ideas about the future of society. The principles should be borne constantly in mind, and whenever one reaches a conclusion that conflicts with them one should carefully reexamine one’s thinking and retain the conclusion only if one has good, solid reasons for doing so.

Industrial-Technological Society Cannot Be Reformed

111. The foregoing principles help to show how hopelessly difficult it would be to reform the industrial system in such a way as to prevent it from progressively narrowing our sphere of freedom. There has been a consistent tendency, going back at least to the Industrial Revolution, for technology to strengthen the system at a high cost in individual freedom and local autonomy. Hence any change designed to protect freedom from technology would be contrary to a fundamental trend in the development of our society. Consequently, such a change either would be a transitory one—soon swamped by the tide of history—or, if large enough to be permanent, would alter the nature of our whole society. This by the first and second principles. Moreover, since society would be altered in a way that could not be predicted in advance (third principle) there would be great risk. Changes large enough to make a lasting difference in favor of freedom would not be initiated because it would be realized that they would gravely disrupt the system. So any attempts at reform would be too timid to be effective. Even if changes large enough to make a lasting difference were initiated, they would be retracted when their disruptive effects became apparent. Thus, permanent changes in favor of freedom could be brought about only by persons prepared to accept radical, dangerous and unpredictable alteration of the entire system. In other words by revolutionaries, not reformers.

112. People anxious to rescue freedom without sacrificing the supposed benefits of technology will suggest naive schemes for some new form of society that would reconcile freedom with technology. Apart from the fact that people who make such suggestions seldom propose any practical means by which the new form of society could be set up in the first place, it follows from the fourth principle that even if the new form of society could be once established, it either would collapse or would give results very different from those expected.

113. So even on very general grounds it seems highly improbable that any way of changing society could be found that would reconcile freedom with modern technology. In the next few sections we will give more specific reasons for concluding that freedom and technological progress are incompatible.

Restriction of Freedom is Unavoidable in Industrial Society

114. As explained in paragraphs 65–67, 70–73, modern man is strapped down by a network of rules and regulations, and his fate depends on the actions of persons remote from him whose decisions he cannot influence. This is not accidental or a result of the arbitrariness of arrogant bureaucrats. It is necessary and inevitable in any technologically advanced society. The system HAS TO regulate human behavior closely in order to function. At work, people have to do what they are told to do, when they are told to do it and in the way they are told to do it, otherwise production would be thrown into chaos. Bureaucracies HAVE TO be run according to rigid rules. To allow any substantial personal discretion to lower-level bureaucrats would disrupt the system and lead to charges of unfairness due to differences in the way individual bureaucrats exercised their discretion. It is true that some restrictions on our freedom could be eliminated, but GENERALLY SPEAKING the regulation of our lives by large organizations is necessary for the functioning of industrial-technological society. The result is a sense of powerlessness on the part of the average person. It may be, however, that formal regulations will tend increasingly to be replaced by psychological tools that make us want to do what the system requires of us. (Propaganda,¹ educational techniques, “mental health” programs, etc.)

115. The system HAS TO force people to behave in ways that are increasingly remote from the natural pattern of human behavior. For example, the system needs scientists, mathematicians and engineers. It can’t function without them. So heavy pressure is put on children to excel in these fields. It isn’t natural for an adolescent human being to spend the bulk of his time sitting at a desk absorbed in study. A normal adolescent wants to spend his time in active contact with the real world. Among primitive peoples the things that children are trained to do tend to be in reasonable harmony with natural human impulses. Among the American Indians, for example, boys were trained in active outdoor pursuits—just the sort of things that boys like. But in our society children are pushed into studying technical subjects, which most do grudgingly.

116. Because of the constant pressure that the system exerts to modify human behavior, there is a gradual increase in the number of people who cannot or will not adjust to society’s requirements: welfare leeches, youth-gang members, cultists, anti-government rebels, radical environmentalist saboteurs, dropouts and resisters of various kinds.

117. In any technologically advanced society the individual’s fate MUST depend on decisions that he personally cannot influence to any great extent. A technological society cannot be broken down into small, autonomous communities, because production depends on the cooperation of very large numbers of people and machines. Such a society MUST be highly organized and decisions HAVE TO be made that affect very large numbers of people. When a decision affects, say,

¹ When someone approves of the purpose for which propaganda is being used in a given case, he generally calls it “education” or applies to it some similar euphemism. But propaganda is propaganda regardless of the purpose for which it is used.

a million people, then each of the affected individuals has, on the average, only a one-millionth share in making the decision. What usually happens in practice is that decisions are made by public officials or corporation executives, or by technical specialists, but even when the public votes on a decision the number of voters ordinarily is too large for the vote of anyone individual to be significant.² Thus most individuals are unable to influence measurably the major decisions that affect their lives. There is no conceivable way to remedy this in a technologically advanced society. The system tries to “solve” this problem by using propaganda to make people WANT the decisions that have been made for them, but even if this “solution” were completely successful in making people feel better, it would be demeaning.

118. Conservatives and some others advocate more “local autonomy.” Local communities once did have autonomy, but such autonomy becomes less and less possible as local communities become more enmeshed with and dependent on large-scale systems like public utilities, computer networks, highway systems, the mass communications media and the modern health-care system. Also operating against autonomy is the fact that technology applied in one location often affects people at other locations far away. Thus pesticide or chemical use near a creek may contaminate the water supply hundreds of miles downstream, and the greenhouse effect affects the whole world.

119. The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. This has nothing to do with the political or social ideology that may pretend to guide the technological system. It is not the fault of capitalism and it is not the fault of socialism. It is the fault of technology, because the system is guided not by ideology but by technical necessity.³ Of course the system does satisfy many human needs, but generally speaking it does this only to the extent that it is to the advantage of the system to do it. It is the needs of the system that are paramount, not those of the human being. For example, the system provides people with food because the system couldn’t function if everyone starved; it attends to people’s psychological needs whenever it can CONVENIENTLY do so, because it couldn’t function if too many people became depressed or rebellious. But the system, for good, solid, practical reasons, must exert constant pressure on people to mold their behavior to the needs of the system. Too much waste accumulating? The government, the media, the educational system, environmentalists, everyone inundates us with a mass of propaganda about recycling. Need more technical personnel? A chorus of voices exhorts kids to study science. No one stops to ask whether it is inhumane to force adolescents to spend the bulk of their time studying subjects that most of them hate. When skilled workers are put out of a job by technical advances and have to undergo “retraining,” no one asks whether it is humiliating for them to be pushed around in this way. It is simply taken for granted that everyone must bow to technical necessity. And for good reason: If human needs were put before technical necessity there would be economic problems, unemployment, shortages or worse. The

² Apologists for the system are fond of citing cases in which elections have been decided by one or two votes, but such cases are rare.

³ “Today, in technologically advanced lands, men live very similar lives in spite of geographical, religious, and political differences. The daily lives of a Christian bank clerk in Chicago, a Buddhist bank clerk in Tokyo, and a Communist bank clerk in Moscow are far more alike than the life any one of them is like that of any single man who lived a thousand years ago. These similarities are the result of a common technology...” L. Sprague de Camp, *The Ancient Engineers*, Ballantine edition, page 17. The lives of the three bank clerks are not IDENTICAL. Ideology does have SOME effect. But all technological societies, in order to survive, must evolve along APPROXIMATELY the same trajectory.

concept of “mental health” in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress.

120. Efforts to make room for a sense of purpose and for autonomy within the system are no better than a joke. For example, one company, instead of having each of its employees assemble only one section of a catalogue, had each assemble a whole catalogue, and this was supposed to give them a sense of purpose and achievement. Some companies have tried to give their employees more autonomy in their work, but for practical reasons this usually can be done only to a very limited extent, and in any case employees are never given autonomy as to ultimate goals—their “autonomous” efforts can never be directed toward goals that they select personally, but only toward their employer’s goals, such as the survival and growth of the company. Any company would soon go out of business if it permitted its employees to act otherwise. Similarly, in any enterprise within a socialist system, workers must direct their efforts toward the goals of the enterprise, otherwise the enterprise will not serve its purpose as part of the system. Once again, for purely technical reasons it is not possible for most individuals or small groups to have much autonomy in industrial society. Even the small-business owner commonly has only limited autonomy. Apart from the necessity of government regulation, he is restricted by the fact that he must fit into the economic system and conform to its requirements. For instance, when someone develops a new technology, the small-business person often has to use that technology whether he wants to or not, in order to remain competitive.

The “Bad” Parts of Technology Cannot Be Separated from the “Good” Parts

121. A further reason why industrial society cannot be reformed in favor of freedom is that modern technology is a unified system in which all parts are dependent on one another. You can’t get rid of the “bad” parts of technology and retain only the “good” parts. Take modern medicine, for example. Progress in medical science depends on progress in chemistry, physics, biology, computer science and other fields. Advanced medical treatments require expensive, high-tech equipment that can be made available only by a technologically progressive, economically rich society. Clearly you can’t have much progress in medicine without the whole technological system and everything that goes with it.

122. Even if medical progress could be maintained without the rest of the technological system, it would by itself bring certain evils. Suppose for example that a cure for diabetes is discovered. People with a genetic tendency to diabetes will then be able to survive and reproduce as well as anyone else. Natural selection against genes for diabetes will cease and such genes will spread throughout the population. (This may be occurring to some extent already, since diabetes, while not curable, can be controlled through the use of insulin.) The same thing will happen with many other diseases susceptibility to which is affected by genetic factors (e.g., childhood cancer), resulting in massive genetic degradation of the population. The only solution will be some sort of eugenics program or extensive genetic engineering of human beings, so that man in the future will no longer be a creation of nature, or of chance, or of God (depending on your religious or philosophical opinions), but a manufactured product.

123. If you think that big government interferes in your life too much NOW, just wait till the government starts regulating the genetic constitution of your children. Such regulation will inevitably follow the introduction of genetic engineering of human beings, because the consequences of unregulated genetic engineering would be disastrous.¹

124. The usual response to such concerns is to talk about “medical ethics.” But a code of ethics would not serve to protect freedom in the face of medical progress; it would only make matters worse. A code of ethics applicable to genetic engineering would be in effect a means of regulating the genetic constitution of human beings. Somebody (probably the upper middle class, mostly) would decide that such and such applications of genetic engineering were “ethical” and others were not, so that in effect they would be imposing their own values on the genetic constitution of the population at large. Even if a code of ethics were chosen on a completely democratic basis, the majority would be imposing their own values on any minorities who might have a different idea of what constituted an “ethical” use of genetic engineering. The only code of ethics that would truly protect freedom would be one that prohibited ANY genetic engineering of human beings, and you can be sure that no such code will ever be applied in a technological society. No code that reduced genetic engineering to a minor role could stand up for long, because the

¹ Just think, an irresponsible genetic engineer might create a lot of terrorists.

temptation presented by the immense power of biotechnology would be irresistible, especially since to the majority of people many of its applications will seem obviously and unequivocally good (eliminating physical and mental diseases, giving people the abilities they need to get along in today's world). Inevitably, genetic engineering will be used extensively, but only in ways consistent with the needs of the industrial-technological system.²

² For a further example of undesirable consequences of medical progress, suppose a reliable cure for cancer is discovered. Even if the treatment is too expensive to be available to any but the elite, it will greatly reduce their incentive to stop the escape of carcinogens into the environment.

Technology is a More Powerful Social Force than the Aspiration for Freedom

125. It is not possible to make a LASTING compromise between technology and freedom, because technology is by far the more powerful social force and continually encroaches on freedom through REPEATED compromises. Imagine the case of two neighbors, each of whom at the outset owns the same amount of land, but one of whom is more powerful than the other. The powerful one demands a piece of the other's land. The weak one refuses. The powerful one says, "Okay, let's compromise. Give me half of what I asked." The weak one has little choice but to give in. Some time later the powerful neighbor demands another piece of land, again there is a compromise, and so forth. By forcing a long series of compromises on the weaker man, the powerful one eventually gets all of his land. So it goes in the conflict between technology and freedom.

126. Let us explain why technology is a more powerful social force than the aspiration for freedom.

127. A technological advance that appears not to threaten freedom often turns out to threaten it very seriously later on. For example, consider motorized transport. A walking man formerly could go where he pleased, go at his own pace without observing any traffic regulations, and was independent of technological support systems. When motor vehicles were introduced they appeared to increase man's freedom. They took no freedom away from the walking man, no one had to have an automobile if he didn't want one, and anyone who did choose to buy an automobile could travel much faster and farther than a walking man. But the introduction of motorized transport soon changed society in such a way as to restrict greatly man's freedom of locomotion. When automobiles became numerous, it became necessary to regulate their use extensively. In a car, especially in densely populated areas, one cannot just go where one likes at one's own pace; one's movement is governed by the flow of traffic and by various traffic laws. One is tied down by various obligations: license requirements, driver test, renewing registration, insurance, maintenance required for safety, monthly payments on purchase price. Moreover, the use of motorized transport is no longer optional. Since the introduction of motorized transport the arrangement of our cities has changed in such a way that the majority of people no longer live within walking distance of their place of employment, shopping areas and recreational opportunities, so that they HAVE TO depend on the automobile for transportation. Or else they must use public transportation, in which case they have even less control over their own movement than when driving a car. Even the walker's freedom is now greatly restricted. In the city he continually has to stop to wait for traffic lights that are designed mainly to serve auto traffic. In the country, motor traffic makes it dangerous and unpleasant to walk along the highway. (Note this important point that we have just illustrated with the case of motorized transport: When a new item of technology is introduced as an option that an individual can accept or not as he

chooses, it does not necessarily REMAIN optional. In many cases the new technology changes society in such a way that people eventually find themselves FORCED to use it.)

128. While technological progress AS A WHOLE continually narrows our sphere of freedom, each new technical advance CONSIDERED BY ITSELF appears to be desirable. Electricity, indoor plumbing, rapid long- distance communications...how could one argue against any of these things, or against any other of the innumerable technical advances that have made modern society? It would have been absurd to resist the introduction of the telephone, for example. It offered many advantages and no disadvantages. Yet, as we explained in paragraphs 59–76, all these technical advances taken together have created a world in which the average man's fate is no longer in his own hands or in the hands of his neighbors and friends, but in those of politicians, corporation executives and remote, anonymous technicians and bureaucrats whom he as an individual has no power to influence.¹ The same process will continue in the future. Take genetic engineering, for example. Few people will resist the introduction of a genetic technique that eliminates a hereditary disease. It does no apparent harm and prevents much suffering. Yet a large number of genetic improvements taken together will make the human being into an engineered product rather than a free creation of chance (or of God, or whatever, depending on your religious beliefs).

129. Another reason why technology is such a powerful social force is that, within the context of a given society, technological progress marches in only one direction; it can never be reversed. Once a technical innovation has been introduced, people usually become dependent on it, so that they can never again do without it, unless it is replaced by some still more advanced innovation. Not only do people become dependent as individuals on a new item of technology, but, even more, the system as a whole becomes dependent on it. (Imagine what would happen to the system today if computers, for example, were eliminated.) Thus the system can move in only one direction, toward greater technologization. Technology repeatedly forces freedom to take a step back but technology can never take a step back—short of the overthrow of the whole technological system.

130. Technology advances with great rapidity and threatens freedom at many different points at the same time (crowding, rules and regulations, increasing dependence of individuals on large organizations, propaganda and other psychological techniques, genetic engineering, invasion of privacy through surveillance devices and computers, etc.). To hold back any ONE of the threats to freedom would require a long and difficult social struggle. Those who want to protect freedom are overwhelmed by the sheer number of new attacks and the rapidity with which they develop, hence they become apathetic and no longer resist. To fight each of the threats separately would be futile. Success can be hoped for only by fighting the technological system as a whole; but that is revolution, not reform.

¹ Since many people may find paradoxical the notion that a large number of good things can add up to a bad thing, we illustrate with an analogy. Suppose Mr. A is playing chess with Mr. B. Mr. C, a grand master, is looking over Mr. A's shoulder. Mr. A of course wants to win his game, so if Mr. C points out a good move for him to make, he is doing Mr. A a favor. But suppose now that Mr. C tells Mr. A how to make ALL of his moves. In each particular instance he does Mr. A a favor by showing him his best move, but by making ALL of his moves for him he spoils his game, since there is no point in Mr. A's playing the game at all if someone else makes all his moves. The situation of modern man is analogous to that of Mr. A. The system makes an individual's life easier for him in innumerable ways, but in doing so it deprives him of control over his own fate.

131. Technicians (we use this term in its broad sense to describe all those who perform a specialized task that requires training) tend to be so involved in their work (their surrogate activity) that when a conflict arises between their technical work and freedom, they almost always decide in favor of their technical work. This is obvious in the case of scientists, but it also appears elsewhere: Educators, humanitarian groups, conservation organizations do not hesitate to use propaganda² or other psychological techniques to help them achieve their laudable ends. Corporations and government agencies, when they find it useful, do not hesitate to collect information about individuals without regard to their privacy. Law enforcement agencies are frequently inconvenienced by the constitutional rights of suspects and often of completely innocent persons, and they do whatever they can do legally (or sometimes illegally) to restrict or circumvent those rights. Most of these educators, government officials and law officers believe in freedom, privacy and constitutional rights, but when these conflict with their work, they usually feel that their work is more important.

132. It is well known that people generally work better and more persistently when striving for a reward than when attempting to avoid a punishment or negative outcome. Scientists and other technicians are motivated mainly by the rewards they get through their work. But those who oppose technological invasions of freedom are working to avoid a negative outcome, consequently there are few who work persistently and well at this discouraging task. If reformers ever achieved a signal victory that seemed to set up a solid barrier against further erosion of freedom through technical progress, most would tend to relax and turn their attention to more agreeable pursuits. But the scientists would remain busy in their laboratories, and technology as it progressed would find ways, in spite of any barriers, to exert more and more control over individuals and make them always more dependent on the system.

133. No social arrangements, whether laws, institutions, customs or ethical codes, can provide permanent protection against technology. History shows that all social arrangements are transitory; they all change or break down eventually. But technological advances are permanent within the context of a given civilization. Suppose for example that it were possible to arrive at some social arrangement that would prevent genetic engineering from being applied to human beings, or prevent it from being applied in such a way as to threaten freedom and dignity. Still, the technology would remain, waiting. Sooner or later the social arrangement would break down. Probably sooner, given the pace of change in our society. Then genetic engineering would begin to invade our sphere of freedom, and this invasion would be irreversible (short of a breakdown of technological civilization itself). Any illusions about achieving anything permanent through social arrangements should be dispelled by what is currently happening with environmental legislation. A few years ago it seemed that there were secure legal barriers preventing at least SOME of the worst forms of environmental degradation. A change in the political wind, and those barriers begin to crumble.

134. For all of the foregoing reasons, technology is a more powerful social force than the aspiration for freedom. But this statement requires an important qualification. It appears that during the next several decades the industrial-technological system will be undergoing severe stresses due to economic and environmental problems, and especially due to problems of human

² When someone approves of the purpose for which propaganda is being used in a given case, he generally calls it "education" or applies to it some similar euphemism. But propaganda is propaganda regardless of the purpose for which it is used.

behavior (alienation, rebellion, hostility, a variety of social and psychological difficulties). We hope that the stresses through which the system is likely to pass will cause it to break down, or at least will weaken it sufficiently so that a revolution against it becomes possible. If such a revolution occurs and is successful, then at that particular moment the aspiration for freedom will have proved more powerful than technology.

135. In paragraph 125 we used an analogy of a weak neighbor who is left destitute by a strong neighbor who takes all his land by forcing on him a series of compromises. But suppose now that the strong neighbor gets sick, so that he is unable to defend himself. The weak neighbor can force the strong one to give him his land back, or he can kill him. If he lets the strong man survive and only forces him to give the land back, he is a fool, because when the strong man gets well he will again take all the land for himself. The only sensible alternative for the weaker man is to kill the strong one while he has the chance. In the same way, while the industrial system is sick we must destroy it. If we compromise with it and let it recover from its sickness, it will eventually wipe out all of our freedom.

Simpler Social Problems Have Proved Intractable

136. If anyone still imagines that it would be possible to reform the system in such a way as to protect freedom from technology, let him consider how clumsily and for the most part unsuccessfully our society has dealt with other social problems that are far more simple and straightforward. Among other things, the system has failed to stop environmental degradation, political corruption, drug trafficking or domestic abuse.

137. Take our environmental problems, for example. Here the conflict of values is straightforward: economic expedience now versus saving some of our natural resources for our grandchildren.¹ But on this subject we get only a lot of blather and obfuscation from the people who have power, and nothing like a clear, consistent line of action, and we keep on piling up environmental problems that our grandchildren will have to live with. Attempts to resolve the environmental issue consist of struggles and compromises between different factions, some of which are ascendant at one moment, others at another moment. The line of struggle changes with the shifting currents of public opinion. This is not a rational process, nor is it one that is likely to lead to a timely and successful solution to the problem. Major social problems, if they get “solved” at all, are rarely or never solved through any rational, comprehensive plan. They just work themselves out through a process in which various competing groups pursuing their own (usually short-term) self-interest² arrive (mainly by luck) at some more or less stable *modus vivendi*. In fact, the principles we formulated in paragraphs 100–106 make it seem doubtful that rational, long-term social planning can EVER be successful.

138. Thus it is clear that the human race has at best a very limited capacity for solving even relatively straightforward social problems. How then is it going to solve the far more difficult and subtle problem of reconciling freedom with technology? Technology presents clear-cut material advantages, whereas freedom is an abstraction that means different things to different people, and its loss is easily obscured by propaganda and fancy talk.

139. And note this important difference: It is conceivable that our environmental problems (for example) may some day be settled through a rational, comprehensive plan, but if this happens it will be only because it is in the long-term interest of the system to solve these problems. But it is NOT in the interest of the system to preserve freedom or small-group autonomy. On the contrary, it is in the interest of the system to bring human behavior under control to the greatest possible extent.³ Thus, while practical considerations may eventually force the system to take a rational, prudent approach to environmental problems, equally practical considerations will force

¹ Here we are considering only the conflict of values within the mainstream. For the sake of simplicity we leave out of the picture “outsider” values like the idea that wild nature is more important than human economic welfare.

² Self-interest is not necessarily MATERIAL self-interest. It can consist in fulfillment of some psychological need, for example, by promoting one’s own ideology or religion.

³ A qualification: It is in the interest of the system to permit a certain prescribed degree of freedom in some areas. For example, economic freedom (with suitable limitations and restraints) has proved effective in promoting

the system to regulate human behavior ever more closely (preferably by indirect means that will disguise the encroachment on freedom). This isn't just our opinion. Eminent social scientists (e.g., James Q. Wilson) have stressed the importance of "socializing" people more effectively.

economic growth. but only planned, circumscribed, limited freedom is in the interest of the system. The individual must always be kept on a leash, even if the leash is sometimes long. (See paragraphs 94, 97.)

Revolution is Easier than Reform

140. We hope we have convinced the reader that the system cannot be reformed in such a way as to reconcile freedom with technology. The only way out is to dispense with the industrial-technological system altogether. This implies revolution, not necessarily an armed uprising, but certainly a radical and fundamental change in the nature of society.

141. People tend to assume that because a revolution involves a much greater change than reform does, it is more difficult to bring about than reform is. Actually, under certain circumstances revolution is much easier than reform. The reason is that a revolutionary movement can inspire an intensity of commitment that a reform movement cannot inspire. A reform movement merely offers to solve a particular social problem. A revolutionary movement offers to solve all problems at one stroke and create a whole new world; it provides the kind of ideal for which people will take great risks and make great sacrifices. For this reason it would be much easier to overthrow the whole technological system than to put effective, permanent restraints on the development or application of anyone segment of technology, such as genetic engineering, for example. Not many people will devote themselves with single-minded passion to imposing and maintaining restraints on genetic engineering, but under suitable conditions large numbers of people may devote themselves passionately to a revolution against the industrial-technological system. As we noted in paragraph 132, reformers seeking to limit certain aspects of technology would be working to avoid a negative outcome. But revolutionaries work to gain a powerful reward-fulfillment of their revolutionary vision-and therefore work harder and more persistently than reformers do.

142. Reform is always restrained by the fear of painful consequences if changes go too far. But once a revolutionary fever has taken hold of a society, people are willing to undergo unlimited hardships for the sake of their revolution. This was clearly shown in the French and Russian Revolutions. It may be that in such cases only a minority of the population is really committed to the revolution, but this minority is sufficiently large and active so that it becomes the dominant force in society. We will have more to say about revolution in paragraphs 180–205).

Control of Human Behavior

143. Since the beginning of civilization, organized societies have had to put pressures on human beings for the sake of the functioning of the social organism. The kinds of pressures vary greatly from one society to another. Some of the pressures are physical (poor diet, excessive labor, environmental pollution), some are psychological (noise, crowding, forcing human behavior into the mold that society requires). In the past, human nature has been approximately constant, or at any rate has varied only within certain bounds. Consequently, societies have been able to push people only up to certain limits. When the limit of human endurance has been passed, things start going wrong: rebellion, or crime, or corruption, or evasion of work, or depression and other mental problems, or an elevated death rate, or a declining birth rate or something else, so that either the society breaks down, or its functioning becomes too inefficient and it is (quickly or gradually, through conquest, attrition or evolution) replaced by some more efficient form of society.¹

144. Thus human nature has in the past put certain limits on the development of societies. People could be pushed only so far and no farther. But today this may be changing, because modern technology is developing ways of modifying human beings.

145. Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them drugs to take away their unhappiness. Science fiction? It is already happening to some extent in our own society. It is well known that the rate of clinical depression has been greatly increasing in recent decades. We believe that this is due to disruption of the power process, as explained in paragraphs 59–76.)

146. Drugs that affect the mind are only one example of the methods of controlling human behavior that modern society is developing. Let us look at some of the other methods.

147. To start with, there are the techniques of surveillance. Hidden video cameras are now used in most stores and in many other places, computers are used to collect and process vast amounts of information about individuals. Information so obtained greatly increases the effectiveness of physical coercion (i.e., law enforcement).² Then there are the methods of propaganda,

¹ We don't mean to suggest that the efficiency or the potential for survival of a society has always been inversely proportional to the amount of pressure or discomfort to which the society subjects people. That certainly is not the case. There is good reason to believe that many primitive societies subjected people to less pressure than European society did, but European society proved far more efficient than any primitive society and always won out in conflicts with such societies because of the advantages conferred by technology.

² If you think that more effective law enforcement is unequivocally good because it suppresses crime, then remember that crime as defined by the system is not necessarily what YOU would call crime. Today, smoking marijuana is a "crime," and, in some places in the U.S., so is possession of an unregistered handgun. Tomorrow, possession of ANY firearm, registered or not, may be made a crime, and the same thing may happen with disapproved methods of child-rearing, such as spanking. In some countries, expression of dissident political opinions is a crime, and there is no certainty that this will never happen in the U.S., since no constitution or political system lasts forever. If a society needs a large, powerful law enforcement establishment, then there is something gravely wrong with that society; it must be subjecting people to severe pressures if so many refuse to follow the rules, or follow them only because forced. Many societies in the past have gotten by with little or no formal law-enforcement.

for which the mass communications media provide effective vehicles. Efficient techniques have been developed for winning elections, selling products, influencing public opinion. The entertainment industry serves as an important psychological tool of the system, possibly even when it is dishing out large amounts of sex and violence. Entertainment provides modern man with an essential means of escape. While absorbed in television, videos, etc., he can forget stress, anxiety, frustration, dissatisfaction. Many primitive peoples, when they don't have any work to do, are quite content to sit for hours at a time doing nothing at all, because they are at peace with themselves and their world. But most modern people must be constantly occupied or entertained, otherwise they get "bored," i.e., they get fidgety, uneasy, irritable.

148. Other techniques strike deeper than the foregoing. Education is no longer a simple affair of paddling a kid's behind when he doesn't know his lessons and patting him on the head when he does know them. It is becoming a scientific technique for controlling the child's development. Sylvan Learning Centers, for example, have had great success in motivating children to study, and psychological techniques are also used with more or less success in many conventional schools. "Parenting" techniques that are taught to parents are designed to make children accept the fundamental values of the system and behave in ways that the system finds desirable. "Mental health" programs, "intervention" techniques, psychotherapy and so forth are ostensibly designed to benefit individuals, but in practice they usually serve as methods for inducing individuals to think and behave as the system requires. (There is no contradiction here; an individual whose attitudes or behavior bring him into conflict with the system is up against a force that is too powerful for him to conquer or escape from, hence he is likely to suffer from stress, frustration, defeat. His path will be much easier if he thinks and behaves as the system requires. In that sense the system is acting for the benefit of the individual when it brainwashes him into conformity.) Child abuse in its gross and obvious forms is disapproved in most if not all cultures. Tormenting a child for a trivial reason or no reason at all is something that appalls almost everyone. But many psychologists interpret the concept of abuse much more broadly. Is spanking, when used as part of a rational and consistent system of discipline, a form of abuse? The question will ultimately be decided by whether or not spanking tends to produce behavior that makes a person fit in well with the existing system of society. In practice, the word "abuse" tends to be interpreted to include any method of child-rearing that produces behavior inconvenient for the system. Thus, when they go beyond the prevention of obvious, senseless cruelty, programs for preventing "child abuse" are directed toward the control of human behavior on behalf of the system.

149. Presumably, research will continue to increase the effectiveness of psychological techniques for controlling human behavior. But we think it is unlikely that psychological techniques alone will be sufficient to adjust human beings to the kind of society that technology is creating. Biological methods probably will have to be used. We have already mentioned the use of drugs in this connection. Neurology may provide other avenues for modifying the human mind, Genetic engineering of human beings is already beginning to occur in the form of "gene therapy," and there is no reason to assume that such methods will not eventually be used to modify those aspects of the body that affect mental functioning.

150. As we mentioned in paragraph 134, industrial society seems likely to be entering a period of severe stress, due in part to problems of human behavior and in part to economic and environmental problems. And a considerable proportion of the system's economic and environmental problems result from the way human beings behave. Alienation, low self-esteem, depression,

hostility, rebellion; children who won't study, youth gangs, illegal drug use, rape, child abuse, other crimes, unsafe sex, teen pregnancy, population growth, political corruption, race hatred, ethnic rivalry, bitter ideological conflict (e.g., pro-choice vs. pro-life), political extremism, terrorism, sabotage, anti-government groups, hate groups. All these threaten the very survival of the system. The system will therefore be FORCED to use every practical means of controlling human behavior.

151. The social disruption that we see today is certainly not the result of mere chance. It can only be a result of the conditions of life that the system imposes on people. (We have argued that the most important of these conditions is disruption of the power process.) If the systems succeeds in imposing sufficient control over human behavior to assure its own survival, a new watershed in human history will have been passed. Whereas formerly the limits of human endurance have imposed limits on the development of societies (as we explained in paragraphs 143, 144), industrial-technological society will be able to pass those limits by modifying human beings, whether by psychological methods or biological methods or both. In the future, social systems will not be adjusted to suit the needs of human beings. Instead, human beings will be adjusted to suit the needs of the system.³

152. Generally speaking, technological control over human behavior will probably not be introduced with a totalitarian intention or even through a conscious desire to restrict human freedom.⁴ Each new step in the assertion of control over the human mind will be taken as a rational response to a problem that faces society, such as curing alcoholism, reducing the crime rate or inducing young people to study science and engineering. In many cases, there will be a humanitarian justification. For example, when a psychiatrist prescribes an antidepressant for a depressed patient, he is clearly doing that individual a favor. It would be inhumane to withhold the drug from someone who needs it. When parents send their children to Sylvan Learning Centers to have them manipulated into becoming enthusiastic about their studies, they do so from concern for their children's welfare. It may be that some of these parents wish that one didn't have to have specialized training to get a job and that their kid didn't have to be brainwashed into becoming a computer nerd. But what can they do? They can't change society, and their child may be unemployable if he doesn't have certain skills. So they send him to Sylvan.

153. Thus control over human behavior will be introduced not by a calculated decision of the authorities but through a process of social evolution (RAPID evolution, however). The process will be impossible to resist, because each advance, considered by itself, will appear to be beneficial, or at least the evil involved in making the advance will seem to be less than that which would result from not making it. (See paragraph 127.) Propaganda for example is used for many good purposes, such as discouraging child abuse or race hatred.⁵ Sex education is obviously useful, yet the effect of sex education (to the extent that it is successful) is to take the shaping of sexual

³ To be sure past societies have had means of influencing human behavior, but these have been primitive and of low effectiveness compared with the technological means that are now being developed.

⁴ However, some psychologists have publicly expressed opinions indicating their contempt for human freedom. And the mathematician Claude Shannon was quoted in *Omni* (August 1987) as saying, "I visualize a time when we will be to robots what dogs are to humans, and I'm rooting for the machines."

⁵ When someone approves of the purpose for which propaganda is being used in a given case, he generally calls it "education" or applies to it some similar euphemism. But propaganda is propaganda regardless of the purpose for which it is used.

attitudes away from the family and put it into the hands of the state as represented by the public school system.

154. Suppose a biological trait is discovered that increases the likelihood that a child will grow up to be a criminal, and suppose some sort of gene therapy can remove this trait.⁶ Of course most parents whose children possess the trait will have them undergo the therapy. It would be inhumane to do otherwise, since the child would probably have a miserable life if he grew up to be a criminal. But many or most primitive societies have a low crime rate in comparison with that of our society, even though they have neither high-tech methods of child-rearing nor harsh systems of punishment. Since there is no reason to suppose that more modern men than primitive men have innate predatory tendencies, the high crime rate of our society must be due to the pressures that modern conditions put on people, to which many cannot or will not adjust. Thus a treatment designed to remove potential criminal tendencies is at least in part a way of re-engineering people so that they suit the requirements of the system.

155. Our society tends to regard as a “sickness” any mode of thought or behavior that is inconvenient for the system, and this is plausible, because when an individual doesn’t fit into the system it causes pain to the individual as well as problems for the system. Thus the manipulation of an individual to adjust him to the system is seen as a “cure” for a “sickness” and therefore as good.

156. In paragraph 127 we pointed out that if the use of a new item of technology is INITIALLY optional, it does not necessarily REMAIN optional, because the new technology tends to change society in such a way that it becomes difficult or impossible for an individual to function without using that technology. This applies also to the technology of human behavior. In a world in which most children are put through a program to make them enthusiastic about studying, a parent will almost be forced to put his kid through such a program, because if he does not, then the kid will grow up to be, comparatively speaking, an ignoramus and therefore unemployable. Or suppose a biological treatment is discovered that, without undesirable side-effects, will greatly reduce the psychological stress from which so many people suffer in our society. If large numbers of people choose to undergo the treatment, then the general level of stress in society will be reduced, so that it will be possible for the system to increase the stress-producing pressures. This will lead more people to undergo the treatment; and so forth, so that eventually the pressures may become so heavy that few people will be able to survive without undergoing the stress-reducing treatment. In fact, something like this seems to have happened already with one of our society’s most important psychological tools for enabling people to reduce (or at least temporarily escape from) stress, namely, mass entertainment (see paragraph 147). Our use of mass entertainment is “optional”: No law requires us to watch television, listen to the radio, read magazines. Yet mass entertainment is a means of escape and stress-reduction on which most of us have become dependent. Everyone complains about the trashiness of television, but almost everyone watches

⁶ This is no science fiction! After writing paragraph 154 we came across an article in *Scientific American* according to which scientists are actively developing techniques for identifying possible future criminals and for treating them by a combination of biological and psychological means. Some scientists advocate compulsory application of the treatment, which may be available in the near future. (See “Seeking the Criminal Element,” by W. Wayt Gibbs, *Scientific American*, March 1995.) Maybe you think this is okay because the treatment would be applied to those who might become violent criminals. But of course it won’t stop there. Next, a treatment will be applied to those who might become drunk drivers (they endanger human life too), then perhaps to people who spank their children, then to environmentalists who sabotage logging equipment, eventually to anyone whose behavior is inconvenient for the system.

it. A few have kicked the TV habit, but it would be a rare person who could get along today without using ANY form of mass entertainment. (Yet until quite recently in human history most people got along very nicely with no other entertainment than that which each local community created for itself.) Without the entertainment industry the system probably would not have been able to get away with putting as much stress-producing pressure on us as it does.

157. Assuming that industrial society survives, it is likely that technology will eventually acquire something approaching complete control over human behavior. It has been established beyond any rational doubt that human thought and behavior have a largely biological basis. As experimenters have demonstrated, feelings such as hunger, pleasure, anger and fear can be turned on and off by electrical stimulation of appropriate parts of the brain. Memories can be destroyed by damaging parts of the brain or they can be brought to the surface by electrical stimulation. Hallucinations can be induced or moods changed by drugs. There may or may not be an immaterial human soul, but if there is one it clearly is less powerful than the biological mechanisms of human behavior. For if that were not the case then researchers would not be able so easily to manipulate human feelings and behavior with drugs and electrical currents.

158. It presumably would be impractical for all people to have electrodes inserted in their heads so that they could be controlled by the authorities. But the fact that human thoughts and feelings are so open to biological intervention shows that the problem of controlling human behavior is mainly a technical problem; a problem of neurons, hormones and complex molecules; the kind of problem that is accessible to scientific attack. Given the outstanding record of our society in solving technical problems, it is overwhelmingly probable that great advances will be made in the control of human behavior.

159. Will public resistance prevent the introduction of technological control of human behavior? It certainly would if an attempt were made to introduce such control all at once. But since technological control will be introduced through a long sequence of small advances, there will be no rational and effective public resistance. (See paragraphs 127.)

160. To those who think that all this sounds like science fiction, we point out that yesterday's science fiction is today's fact. The Industrial Revolution has radically altered man's environment and way of life, and it is only to be expected that as technology is increasingly applied to the human body and mind, man himself will be altered as radically as his environment and way of life have been.

Human Race at a Crossroads

161. But we have gotten ahead of our story. It is one thing to develop in the laboratory a series of psychological or biological techniques for manipulating human behavior and quite another to integrate these techniques into a functioning social system. The latter problem is the more difficult of the two. For example, while the techniques of educational psychology doubtless work quite well in the “lab schools” where they are developed, it is not necessarily easy to apply them effectively throughout our educational system. We all know what many of our schools are like. The teachers are too busy taking knives and guns away from the kids to subject them to the latest techniques for making them into computer nerds. Thus, in spite of all its technical advances relating to human behavior, the system to date has not been impressively successful in controlling human beings. The people whose behavior is fairly well under the control of the system are those of the type that might be called “bourgeois.” But there are growing numbers of people who in one way or another are rebels against the system: welfare leeches, youth gangs, cultists, satanists, Nazis, radical environmentalists, militia-men, etc.

162. The system is currently engaged in a desperate struggle to overcome certain problems that threaten its survival, among which the problems of human behavior are the most important. If the system succeeds in acquiring sufficient control over human behavior quickly enough, it will probably survive. Otherwise it will break down. We think the issue will most likely be resolved within the next several decades, say 40 to 100 years.

163. Suppose the system survives the crisis of the next several decades. By that time it will have to have solved, or at least brought under control, the principal problems that confront it, in particular that of “socializing” human beings; that is, making people sufficiently docile so that their behavior no longer threatens the system. That being accomplished, it does not appear that there would be any further obstacle to the development of technology, and it would presumably advance toward its logical conclusion, which is complete control over everything on Earth, including human beings and all other important organisms. The system may become a unitary, monolithic organization, or it may be more or less fragmented and consist of a number of organizations coexisting in a relationship that includes elements of both cooperation and competition, just as today the government, the corporations and other large organizations both cooperate and compete with one another. Human freedom mostly will have vanished, because individuals and small groups will be impotent vis-à-vis large organizations armed with supertechnology and an arsenal of advanced psychological and biological tools for manipulating human beings, besides instruments of surveillance and physical coercion. Only a small number of people will have any real power, and even these probably will have only very limited freedom, because their behavior too will be regulated; just as today our politicians and corporation executives can retain their positions of power only as long as their behavior remains within certain fairly narrow limits.

164. Don’t imagine that the system will stop developing further techniques for controlling human beings and nature once the crisis of the next few decades is over and increasing control is no longer necessary for the system’s survival. On the contrary, once the hard times are over the

system will increase its control over people and nature more rapidly, because it will no longer be hampered by difficulties of the kind that it is currently experiencing. Survival is not the principal motive for extending control. As we explained in paragraphs 87–90, technicians and scientists carry on their work largely as a surrogate activity; that is, they satisfy their need for power by solving technical problems. They will continue to do this with unabated enthusiasm, and among the most interesting and challenging problems for them to solve will be those of understanding the human body and mind and intervening in their development. For the “good of humanity,” of course.

165. But suppose on the other hand that the stresses of the coming decades prove to be too much for the system. If the system breaks down there may be a period of chaos, a “time of troubles” such as those that history has recorded at various epochs in the past. It is impossible to predict what would emerge from such a time of troubles, but at any rate the human race would be given a new chance. The greatest danger is that industrial society may begin to reconstitute itself within the first few years after the breakdown. Certainly there will be many people (power-hungry types especially) who will be anxious to get the factories running again.

166. Therefore two tasks confront those who hate the servitude to which the industrial system is reducing the human race. First, we must work to heighten the social stresses within the system so as to increase the likelihood that it will break down or be weakened sufficiently so that a revolution against it becomes possible. Second, it is necessary to develop and propagate an ideology that opposes technology and the industrial system. Such an ideology can become the basis for a revolution against industrial society if and when the system becomes sufficiently weakened. And such an ideology will help to assure that, if and when industrial society breaks down, its remnants will be smashed beyond repair, so that the system cannot be reconstituted. The factories should be destroyed, technical books burned, etc.

Human Suffering

167. The industrial system will not break down purely as a result of revolutionary action. It will not be vulnerable to revolutionary attack unless its own internal problems of development lead it into very serious difficulties. So if the system breaks down it will do so either spontaneously, or through a process that is in part spontaneous but helped along by revolutionaries. If the breakdown is sudden, many people will die, since the world's population has become so overblown that it cannot even feed itself any longer without advanced technology. Even if the breakdown is gradual enough so that reduction of the population can occur more through lowering of the birth rate than through elevation of the death rate, the process of de-industrialization probably will be very chaotic and involve much suffering. It is naive to think it likely that technology can be phased out in a smoothly managed, orderly way, especially since the technophiles will fight stubbornly at every step. Is it therefore cruel to work for the breakdown of the system? Maybe, but maybe not. In the first place, revolutionaries will not be able to break the system down unless it is already in enough trouble so that there would be a good chance of its eventually breaking down by itself anyway; and the bigger the system grows, the more disastrous the consequences of its breakdown will be; so it may be that revolutionaries, by hastening the onset of the breakdown, will be reducing the extent of the disaster.

168. In the second place, one has to balance struggle and death against the loss of freedom and dignity. To many of us, freedom and dignity are more important than a long life or avoidance of physical pain. Besides, we all have to die sometime, and it may be better to die fighting for survival, or for a cause, than to live a long but empty and purposeless life.

169. In the third place, it is not at all certain that survival of the system will lead to less suffering than the breakdown of the system would. The system has already caused, and is continuing to cause, immense suffering all over the world. Ancient cultures, that for hundreds or thousands of years gave people a satisfactory relationship with each other and with their environment, have been shattered by contact with industrial society, and the result has been a whole catalog of economic, environmental, social and psychological problems. One of the effects of the intrusion of industrial society has been that over much of the world traditional controls on population have been thrown out of balance. Hence the population explosion, with all that that implies. Then there is the psychological suffering that is widespread throughout the supposedly fortunate countries of the West (see paragraphs 44, 45). No one knows what will happen as a result of ozone depletion, the greenhouse effect and other environmental problems that cannot yet be foreseen. And, as nuclear proliferation has shown, new technology cannot be kept out of the hands of dictators and irresponsible Third World nations. Would you like to speculate about what Iraq or North Korea will do with genetic engineering?

170. "Oh!" say the technophiles, "Science is going to fix all that! We will conquer famine, eliminate psychological suffering, make everybody healthy and happy!" Yeah, sure. That's what they said 200 years ago. The Industrial Revolution was supposed to eliminate poverty, make everybody happy, etc. The actual result has been quite different. The technophiles are hope-

lessly naive (or self-deceiving) in their understanding of social problems. They are unaware of (or choose to ignore) the fact that when large changes, even seemingly beneficial ones, are introduced into a society, they lead to a long sequence of other changes, most of which are impossible to predict (paragraph 103). In the mean time there will be great suffering. So it is not at all clear that the survival of industrial society would involve less suffering than the breakdown of that society would. Technology has gotten the human race into a fix from which there is not likely to be any easy escape.

The Future

171. But suppose now that industrial society does survive the next several decades and that the bugs do eventually get worked out of the system, so that it functions smoothly. What kind of system will it be? We will consider several possibilities.

172. First let us postulate that the computer scientists succeed in developing intelligent machines that can do all things better than human beings can do them. In that case presumably all work will be done by vast, highly organized systems of machines and no human effort will be necessary. Either of two cases might occur. The machines might be permitted to make all of their own decisions without human oversight, or else human control over the machines might be retained.

173. If the machines are permitted to make all their own decisions we can't make any conjecture as to the results, because it is impossible to guess how such machines might behave. We only point out that the fate of the human race would be at the mercy of the machines. It might be argued that the human race would never be foolish enough to hand over all power to the machines. But we are suggesting neither that the human race would voluntarily turn power over to the machines nor that the machines would willfully seize power. What we do suggest is that the human race might easily permit itself to drift into a position of such dependence on the machines that it would have no practical choice but to accept all of the machines' decisions. As society and the problems that face it become more and more complex and as machines become more and more intelligent, people will let machines make more and more of their decisions for them, simply because machine-made decisions will bring better results than man-made ones. Eventually a stage may be reached at which the decisions necessary to keep the system running will be so complex that human beings will be incapable of making them intelligently. At that stage the machines will be in effective control. People won't be able to just turn the machines off, because they will be so dependent on them that turning them off would amount to suicide.

174. On the other hand it is possible that human control over the machines may be retained. In that case the average man may have control over certain private machines of his own, such as his car or his personal computer, but control over large systems of machines will be in the hands of a tiny elite—just as it is today, but with two differences. Due to improved techniques the elite will have greater control over the masses; and because human work will no longer be necessary the masses will be superfluous, a useless burden on the system. If the elite is ruthless they may simply decide to exterminate the mass of humanity. If they are humane they may use propaganda or other psychological or biological techniques to reduce the birth rate until the mass of humanity becomes extinct, leaving the world to the elite. Or, if the elite consist of soft-hearted liberals, they may decide to play the role of good shepherds to the rest of the human race. They will see to it that everyone's physical needs are satisfied, that all children are raised under psychologically hygienic conditions, that everyone has a wholesome hobby to keep him busy, and that anyone who may become dissatisfied undergoes "treatment" to cure his "problem." Of course, life will be so purposeless that people will have to be biologically or psychologically

engineered either to remove their need for the power process or to make them “sublimate” their drive for power into some harmless hobby. These engineered human beings may be happy in such a society, but they most certainly will not be free. They will have been reduced to the status of domestic animals.

175. But suppose now that the computer scientists do not succeed in developing artificial intelligence, so that human work remains necessary. Even so, machines will take care of more and more of the simpler tasks so that there will be an increasing surplus of human workers at the lower levels of ability. (We see this happening already. There are many people who find it difficult or impossible to get work, because for intellectual or psychological reasons they cannot acquire the level of training necessary to make themselves useful in the present system.) On those who are employed, ever-increasing demands will be placed: They will need more and more training, more and more ability, and will have to be ever more reliable, conforming and docile, because they will be more and more like cells of a giant organism. Their tasks will be increasingly specialized so that their work will be, in a sense, out of touch with the real world, being concentrated on one tiny slice of reality. The system will have to use any means that it can, whether psychological or biological, to engineer people to be docile, to have the abilities that the system requires and to “sublimate” their drive for power into some specialized task. But the statement that the people of such a society will have to be docile may require qualification. The society may find competitiveness useful, provided that ways are found of directing competitiveness into channels that serve the needs of the system. We can imagine a future society in which there is endless competition for positions of prestige and power. But no more than a very few people will ever reach the top, where the only real power is (see end of paragraph 163). Very repellent is a society in which a person can satisfy his need for power only by pushing large numbers of other people out of the way and depriving them of THEIR opportunity for power.

176. One can envision scenarios that incorporate aspects of more than one of the possibilities that we have just discussed. For instance, it may be that machines will take over most of the work that is of real, practical importance, but that human beings will be kept busy by being given relatively unimportant work. It has been suggested, for example, that a great development of the service industries might provide work for human beings. Thus people would spend their time shining each other’s shoes, driving each other around in taxicabs, making handicrafts for one another, waiting on each other’s tables, etc. This seems to us a thoroughly contemptible way for the human race to end up, and we doubt that many people would find fulfilling lives in such pointless busy-work. They would seek other, dangerous outlets (drugs, crime, “cults,” hate groups) unless they were biologically or psychologically engineered to adapt them to such a way of life.

177. Needless to say, the scenarios outlined above do not exhaust all the possibilities. They only indicate the kinds of outcomes that seem to us most likely. But we can envision no plausible scenarios that are any more palatable than the ones we’ve just described. It is overwhelmingly probable that if the industrial-technological system survives the next 40 to 100 years, it will by that time have developed certain general characteristics: Individuals (at least those of the “bourgeois” type, who are integrated into the system and make it run, and who therefore have all the power) will be more dependent than ever on large organizations; they will be more “socialized” than ever and their physical and mental qualities to a significant extent (possibly to a very great extent) will be those that are engineered into them rather than being the results of chance (or of God’s will, or whatever); and whatever may be left of wild nature will be reduced to remnants pre-

served for scientific study and kept under the supervision and management of scientists (hence it will no longer be truly wild). In the long run (say a few centuries from now) it is likely that neither the human race nor any other important organisms will exist as we know them today, because once you start modifying organisms through genetic engineering there is no reason to stop at any particular point, so that the modifications will probably continue until man and other organisms have been utterly transformed.

178. Whatever else may be the case, it is certain that technology is creating for human beings a new physical and social environment radically different from the spectrum of environments to which natural selection has adapted the human race physically and psychologically. If man is not adjusted to this new environment by being artificially re-engineered, then he will be adapted to it through a long and painful process of natural selection. The former is far more likely than the latter.

179. It would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences.

Strategy

180. The technophiles are taking us all on an utterly reckless ride into the unknown. Many people understand something of what technological progress is doing to us, yet take a passive attitude toward it because they think it is inevitable. But we (FC) don't think it is inevitable. We think it can be stopped, and we will give here some indications of how to go about stopping it.

181. As we stated in paragraph 166, the two main tasks for the present are to promote social stress and instability in industrial society and to develop and propagate an ideology that opposes technology and the industrial system. When the system becomes sufficiently stressed and unstable, a revolution against technology may be possible. The pattern would be similar to that of the French and Russian Revolutions. French society and Russian society, for several decades prior to their respective revolutions, showed increasing signs of stress and weakness. Meanwhile, ideologies were being developed that offered a new world-view that was quite different from the old one. In the Russian case revolutionaries were actively working to undermine the old order. Then, when the old system was put under sufficient additional stress (by financial crisis in France, by military defeat in Russia) it was swept away by revolution. What we propose is something along the same lines.

182. It will be objected that the French and Russian Revolutions were failures. But most revolutions have two goals. One is to destroy an old form of society and the other is to set up the new form of society envisioned by the revolutionaries. The French and Russian revolutionaries failed (fortunately!) to create the new kind of society of which they dreamed, but they were quite successful in destroying the old society. We have no illusions about the feasibility of creating a new, ideal form of society. Our goal is only to destroy the existing form of society.

183. But an ideology, in order to gain enthusiastic support, must have a positive ideal as well as a negative one; it must be FOR something as well as AGAINST something. The positive ideal that we propose is Nature. That is, WILD nature: Those aspects of the functioning of the Earth and its living things that are independent of human management and free of human interference and control. And with wild nature we include human nature, by which we mean those aspects of the functioning of the human individual that are not subject to regulation by organized society but are products of chance, or free will, or God (depending on your religious or philosophical opinions).

184. Nature makes a perfect counter-ideal to technology for several reasons. Nature (that which is outside the power of the system) is the opposite of technology (which seeks to expand indefinitely the power of the system). Most people will agree that nature is beautiful; certainly it has tremendous popular appeal. The radical environmentalists ALREADY hold an ideology that exalts nature and opposes technology.¹ It is not necessary for the sake of nature to set up some

¹ A further advantage of nature as a counter-ideal to technology is that, in many people, nature inspires the kind of reverence that is associated with religion, so that nature could perhaps be idealized on a religious basis. It is true that in many societies religion has served as a support and justification for the established order, but it is also true that religion has often provided a basis for rebellion. Thus it may be useful to introduce a religious element into the

chimerical utopia or any new kind of social order. Nature takes care of itself: It was a spontaneous creation that existed long before any human society, and for countless centuries many different kinds of human societies coexisted with nature without doing it an excessive amount of damage. Only with the Industrial Revolution did the effect of human society on nature become really devastating. To relieve the pressure on nature it is not necessary to create a special kind of social system, it is only necessary to get rid of industrial society. Granted, this will not solve all problems. Industrial society has already done tremendous damage to nature and it will take a very long time for the scars to heal. Besides, even preindustrial societies can do significant damage to nature. Nevertheless, getting rid of industrial society will accomplish a great deal. It will relieve the worst of the pressure on nature so that the scars can begin to heal. It will remove the capacity of organized society to keep increasing its control over nature (including human nature). Whatever kind of society may exist after the demise of the industrial system, it is certain that most people will live close to nature, because in the absence of advanced technology there is no other way that people CAN live. To feed themselves they must be peasants, or herdsmen, or fishermen, or hunters, etc. And, generally speaking, local autonomy should tend to increase, because lack of advanced technology and rapid communications will limit the capacity of governments or other large organizations to control local communities.

185. As for the negative consequences of eliminating industrial society—well, you can't eat your cake and have it too. To gain one thing you have to sacrifice another.

186. Most people hate psychological conflict. For this reason they avoid doing any serious thinking about difficult social issues, and they like to have such issues presented to them in simple, black-and-white terms: THIS is all good and THAT is all bad. The revolutionary ideology should therefore be developed on two levels.

187. On the more sophisticated level the ideology should address itself to people who are intelligent, thoughtful and rational. The object should be to create a core of people who will be opposed to the industrial system on a rational, thought-out basis, with full appreciation of the problems and ambiguities involved, and of the price that has to be paid for getting rid of the system. It is particularly important to attract people of this type, as they are capable people and will be instrumental in influencing others. These people should be addressed on as rational a level as possible. Facts should never intentionally be distorted and intemperate language should be avoided. This does not mean that no appeal can be made to the emotions, but in making such appeal, care should be taken to avoid misrepresenting the truth or doing anything else that would destroy the intellectual respectability of the ideology.

rebellion against technology, the more so because Western society today has no strong religious foundation. Religion nowadays either is used as cheap and transparent support for narrow, short-sighted selfishness (some conservatives use it this way), or even is cynically exploited to make easy money (by many evangelists), or has degenerated into crude irrationalism (fundamentalist protestant sects, "cults"), or is simply stagnant (Catholicism, mainline Protestantism). The nearest thing to a strong, widespread, dynamic religion that the West has seen in recent times has been the quasi-religion of leftism, but leftism today is fragmented and has no clear, unified, inspiring goal. Thus there is a religious vacuum in our society that could perhaps be filled by a religion focused on nature in opposition to technology. But it would be a mistake to try to concoct artificially a religion to fill this role. Such an invented religion would probably be a failure. Take the "Gaia" religion for example. Do its adherents REALLY believe in it or are they just play-acting? If they are just play-acting their religion will be a flop in the end. It is probably best not to try to introduce religion into the conflict of nature vs. technology unless you REALLY believe in that religion yourself and find that it arouses a deep, strong, genuine response in many other people.

188. On a second level, the ideology should be propagated in a simplified form that will enable the unthinking majority to see the conflict of technology vs. nature in unambiguous terms. But even on this second level the ideology should not be expressed in language that is so cheap, intemperate or irrational that it alienates people of the thoughtful and rational type. Cheap, intemperate propaganda sometimes achieves impressive short-term gains, but it will be more advantageous in the long run to keep the loyalty of a small number of intelligently committed people than to arouse the passions of an unthinking, fickle mob who will change their attitude as soon as someone comes along with a better propaganda gimmick. However, propaganda of the rabble-rousing type may be necessary when the system is nearing the point of collapse and there is a final struggle between rival ideologies to determine which will become dominant when the old world-view goes under.

189. Prior to that final struggle, the revolutionaries should not expect to have a majority of people on their side. History is made by active, determined minorities, not by the majority, which seldom has a clear and consistent idea of what it really wants. Until the time comes for the final push toward revolution,² the task of revolutionaries will be less to win the shallow support of the majority than to build a small core of deeply committed people. As for the majority, it will be enough to make them aware of the existence of the new ideology and remind them of it frequently; though of course it will be desirable to get majority support to the extent that this can be done without weakening the core of seriously committed people.

190. Any kind of social conflict helps to destabilize the system, but one should be careful about what kind of conflict one encourages. The line of conflict should be drawn between the mass of the people and the power-holding elite of industrial society (politicians, scientists, upper-level business executives, government officials, etc.). It should NOT be drawn between the revolutionaries and the mass of the people. For example, it would be bad strategy for the revolutionaries to condemn Americans for their habits of consumption. Instead, the average American should be portrayed as a victim of the advertising and marketing industry, which has suckered him into buying a lot of junk that he doesn't need and that is very poor compensation for his lost freedom. Either approach is consistent with the facts. It is merely a matter of attitude whether you blame the advertising industry for manipulating the public or blame the public for allowing itself to be manipulated. As a matter of strategy one should generally avoid blaming the public.

191. One should think twice before encouraging any other social conflict than that between the power-holding elite (which wields technology) and the general public (over which technology exerts its power). For one thing, other conflicts tend to distract attention from the important conflicts (between power-elite and ordinary people, between technology and nature); for another thing, other conflicts may actually tend to encourage technologization, because each side in such a conflict wants to use technological power to gain advantages over its adversary. This is clearly seen in rivalries between nations. It also appears in ethnic conflicts within nations. For example, in America many black leaders are anxious to gain power for African-Americans by placing black individuals in the technological power-elite. They want there to be many black government officials, scientists, corporation executives and so forth. In this way they are helping to absorb the African-American subculture into the technological system. Generally speaking, one should

² Assuming that such a final push occurs. Conceivably the industrial system might be eliminated in a somewhat gradual or piecemeal fashion. (See paragraphs 4, 167 and Note 32.)

encourage only those social conflicts that can be fitted into the framework of the conflicts of power-elite vs. ordinary people, technology vs. nature.

192. But the way to discourage ethnic conflict is NOT through militant advocacy of minority rights (see paragraphs 21). Instead, the revolutionaries should emphasize that although minorities do suffer more or less disadvantage, this disadvantage is of peripheral significance. Our real enemy is the industrial-technological system, and in the struggle against the system, ethnic distinctions are of no importance.

193. The kind of revolution we have in mind will not necessarily involve an armed uprising against any government. It may or may not involve physical violence, but it will not be a POLITICAL revolution. Its focus will be on technology and economics, not politics.³

194. Probably the revolutionaries should even AVOID assuming political power, whether by legal or illegal means, until the industrial system is stressed to the danger point and has proved itself to be a failure in the eyes of most people. Suppose for example that some “green” party should win control of the United States Congress in an election. In order to avoid betraying or watering down their own ideology they would have to take vigorous measures to turn economic growth into economic shrinkage. To the average man the results would appear disastrous: There would be massive unemployment, shortages of commodities, etc. Even if the grosser ill effects could be avoided through superhumanly skillful management, still people would have to begin giving up the luxuries to which they have become addicted. Dissatisfaction would grow, the “green” party would be voted out of office and the revolutionaries would have suffered a severe setback. For this reason the revolutionaries should not try to acquire political power until the system has gotten itself into such a mess that any hardships will be seen as resulting from the failures of the industrial system itself and not from the policies of the revolutionaries. The revolution against technology will probably have to be a revolution by outsiders, a revolution from below and not from above.

195. The revolution must be international and worldwide. It cannot be carried out on a nation-by-nation basis. Whenever it is suggested that the United States, for example, should cut back on technological progress or economic growth, people get hysterical and start screaming that if we fall behind in technology the Japanese will get ahead of us. Holy robots! The world will fly off its orbit if the Japanese ever sell more cars than we do! (Nationalism is a great promoter of technology.) More reasonably, it is argued that if the relatively democratic nations of the world fall behind in technology while nasty, dictatorial nations like China, Vietnam and North Korea continue to progress, eventually the dictators may come to dominate the world. That is why the industrial system should be attacked in all nations simultaneously, to the extent that this may be possible. True, there is no assurance that the industrial system can be destroyed at approximately the same time all over the world, and it is even conceivable that the attempt to overthrow the system could lead instead to the domination of the system by dictators. That is a risk that has to be taken. And it is worth taking, since the difference between a “democratic” industrial system and one controlled by dictators is small compared with the difference between

³ It is even conceivable (remotely) that the revolution might consist only of a massive change of attitudes toward technology resulting in a relatively gradual and painless disintegration of the industrial system. But if this happens we'll be very lucky. It's far more probable that the transition to a non-technological society will be very difficult and full of conflicts and disasters.

an industrial system and a non-industrial one.⁴ It might even be argued that an industrial system controlled by dictators would be preferable, because dictator-controlled systems usually have proved inefficient, hence they are presumably more likely to break down. Look at Cuba.

196. Revolutionaries might consider favoring measures that tend to bind the world economy into a unified whole. Free trade agreements like NAFTA and GATT are probably harmful to the environment in the short run, but in the long run they may perhaps be advantageous because they foster economic interdependence between nations. It will be easier to destroy the industrial system on a worldwide basis if the world economy is so unified that its breakdown in any one major nation will lead to its breakdown in all industrialized nations.

197. Some people take the line that modern man has too much power, too much control over nature; they argue for a more passive attitude on the part of the human race. At best these people are expressing themselves unclearly, because they fail to distinguish between power for LARGE ORGANIZATIONS and power for INDIVIDUALS and SMALL GROUPS. It is a mistake to argue for powerlessness and passivity, because people NEED power. Modern man as a collective entity—that is, the industrial system—has immense power over nature, and we (FC) regard this as evil. But modern INDIVIDUALS and SMALL GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS have far less power than primitive man ever did. Generally speaking, the vast power of “modern man” over nature is exercised not by individuals or small groups but by large organizations. To the extent that the average modern INDIVIDUAL can wield the power of technology, he is permitted to do so only within narrow limits and only under the supervision and control of the system. (You need a license for everything and with the license come rules and regulations.) The individual has only those technological powers with which the system chooses to provide him. His PERSONAL power over nature is slight.

198. Primitive INDIVIDUALS and SMALL GROUPS actually had considerable power over nature; or maybe it would be better to say power WITHIN nature. When primitive man needed food he knew how to find and prepare edible roots, how to track game and take it with homemade weapons. He knew how to protect himself from heat, cold, rain, dangerous animals, etc. But primitive man did relatively little damage to nature because the COLLECTIVE power of primitive society was negligible compared to the COLLECTIVE power of industrial society.

199. Instead of arguing for powerlessness and passivity, one should argue that the power of the INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM should be broken, and that this will greatly INCREASE the power and freedom of INDIVIDUALS and SMALL GROUPS.

200. Until the industrial system has been thoroughly wrecked, the destruction of that system must be the revolutionaries’ ONLY goal. Other goals would distract attention and energy from the main goal. More importantly, if the revolutionaries permit themselves to have any other goal than the destruction of technology, they will be tempted to use technology as a tool for reaching that other goal. If they give in to that temptation, they will fall right back into the technological trap, because modern technology is a unified, tightly organized system, so that, in order to retain SOME technology, one finds oneself obliged to retain MOST technology, hence one ends up sacrificing only token amounts of technology.

201. Suppose for example that the revolutionaries took “social justice” as a goal. Human nature being what it is, social justice would not come about spontaneously; it would have to be

⁴ The economic and technological structure of a society are far more important than its political structure in determining the way the average man lives. (See paragraphs 95, 119 and Notes 16, 18.)

enforced. In order to enforce it the revolutionaries would have to retain central organization and control. For that they would need rapid long-distance transportation and communication, and therefore all the technology needed to support the transportation and communication systems. To feed and clothe poor people they would have to use agricultural and manufacturing technology. And so forth. So that the attempt to ensure social justice would force them to retain most parts of the technological system. Not that we have anything against social justice, but it must not be allowed to interfere with the effort to get rid of the technological system.

202. It would be hopeless for revolutionaries to try to attack the system without using SOME modern technology. If nothing else they must use the communications media to spread their message. But they should use modern technology for only ONE purpose: to attack the technological system.

203. Imagine an alcoholic sitting with a barrel of wine in front of him. Suppose he starts saying to himself, "Wine isn't bad for you if used in moderation. Why, they say small amounts of wine, are even good for you! It won't do me any harm if I take just one little drink..." Well, you know what is going to happen. Never forget that the human race with technology is just like an alcoholic with a barrel of wine.

204. Revolutionaries should have as many children as they can. There is strong scientific evidence that social attitudes are to a significant extent inherited. No one suggests that a social attitude is a direct outcome of a person's genetic constitution, but it appears that personality traits are partly inherited and that certain personality traits tend, within the context of our society, to make a person more likely to hold this or that social attitude. Objections to these findings have been raised, but the objections are feeble and seem to be ideologically motivated. In any event, no one denies that children tend on the average to hold social attitudes similar to those of their parents. From our point of view it doesn't matter all that much whether the attitudes are passed on genetically or through childhood training. In either case they ARE passed on.

205. The trouble is that many of the people who are inclined to rebel against the industrial system are also concerned about the population problem, hence they are apt to have few or no children. In this way they may be handing the world over to the sort of people who support or at least accept the industrial system. To ensure the strength of the next generation of revolutionaries the present generation should reproduce itself abundantly. In doing so they will be worsening the population problem only slightly. And the most important problem is to get rid of the industrial system, because once the industrial system is gone the world's population necessarily will decrease (see paragraph 167); whereas, if the industrial system survives, it will continue developing new techniques of food production that may enable the world's population to keep increasing almost indefinitely.

206. With regard to revolutionary strategy, the only points on which we absolutely insist are that the single, overriding goal must be the elimination of modern technology, and that no other goal can be allowed to compete with this one. For the rest, revolutionaries should take an empirical approach. If experience indicates that some of the recommendations made in the foregoing paragraphs are not going to give good results, then those recommendations should be discarded.

Two Kinds of Technology

207. An argument likely to be raised against our proposed revolution is that it is bound to fail, because (it is claimed) throughout history technology has always progressed, never regressed, hence technological regression is impossible. But this claim is false.

208. We distinguish between two kinds of technology, which we will call small-scale technology and organization-dependent technology. Small-scale technology is technology that can be used by small-scale communities without outside assistance. Organization-dependent technology is technology that depends on large-scale social organization. We are aware of no significant cases of regression in small-scale technology. But organization-dependent technology DOES regress when the social organization on which it depends breaks down. Example: When the Roman Empire fell apart the Romans' small-scale technology survived because any clever village craftsman could build, for instance, a water wheel, any skilled smith could make steel by Roman methods, and so forth. But the Romans' organization-dependent technology DID regress. Their aqueducts fell into disrepair and were never rebuilt. Their techniques of road construction were lost. The Roman system of urban sanitation was forgotten, so that not until rather recent times did the sanitation of European cities equal that of ancient Rome.

209. The reason why technology has seemed always to progress is that, until perhaps a century or two before the Industrial Revolution, most technology was small-scale technology. But most of the technology developed since the Industrial Revolution is organization-dependent technology. Take the refrigerator for example. Without factory-made parts or the facilities of a post-industrial machine shop it would be virtually impossible for a handful of local craftsmen to build a refrigerator. If by some miracle they did succeed in building one it would be useless to them without a reliable source of electric power. So they would have to dam a stream and build a generator. Generators require large amounts of copper wire. Imagine trying to make that wire without modern machinery. And where would they get a gas suitable for refrigeration? It would be much easier to build an icehouse or preserve food by drying or pickling, as was done before the invention of the refrigerator.

210. So it is clear that if the industrial system were once thoroughly broken down, refrigeration technology would quickly be lost. The same is true of other organization-dependent technology. And once this technology had been lost for a generation or so it would take centuries to rebuild it, just as it took centuries to build it the first time around. Surviving technical books would be few and scattered. An industrial society, if built from scratch without outside help, can only be built in a series of stages: You need tools to make tools to make tools to make tools...A long process of economic development and progress in social organization is required. And, even in the absence of an ideology opposed to technology, there is no reason to believe that anyone would be interested in rebuilding industrial society. The enthusiasm for "progress" is a phenomenon peculiar to the modern form of society, and it seems not to have existed prior to the 17th century or thereabouts.

211. In the late Middle Ages there were four main civilizations that were about equally “advanced”: Europe, the Islamic world, India, and the Far East (China, Japan, Korea). Three of these civilizations remained more or less stable, and only Europe became dynamic. No one knows why Europe became dynamic at that time; historians have their theories but these are only speculation. At any rate it is clear that rapid development toward a technological form of society occurs only under special conditions. So there is no reason to assume that a long-lasting technological regression cannot be brought about.

212. Would society EVENTUALLY develop again toward an industrial-technological form? Maybe, but there is no use in worrying about it, since we can’t predict or control events 500 or 1,000 years in the future. Those problems must be dealt with by the people who will live at that time.

The Danger of Leftism

213. Because of their need for rebellion and for membership in a movement, leftists or persons of similar psychological type often are attracted to a rebellious or activist movement whose goals and membership are not initially leftist. The resulting influx of leftist types can easily turn a non-leftist movement into a leftist one, so that leftist goals replace or distort the original goals of the movement.

214. To avoid this, a movement that exalts nature and opposes technology must take a resolutely anti-leftist stance and must avoid all collaboration with leftists. Leftism is in the long run inconsistent with wild nature, with human freedom and with the elimination of modern technology. Leftism is collectivist; it seeks to bind together the entire world (both nature and the human race) into a unified whole. But this implies management of nature and of human life by organized society, and it requires advanced technology. You can't have a united world without rapid long-distance transportation and communication, you can't make all people love one another without sophisticated psychological techniques, you can't have a "planned society" without the necessary technological base. Above all, leftism is driven by the need for power, and the leftist seeks power on a collective basis, through identification with a mass movement or an organization. Leftism is unlikely ever to give up technology, because technology is too valuable a source of collective power.

215. The anarchist¹ too seeks power, but he seeks it on an individual or small-group basis; he wants individuals and small groups to be able to control the circumstances of their own lives. He opposes technology because it makes small groups dependent on large organizations.

216. Some leftists may seem to oppose technology, but they will oppose it only so long as they are outsiders and the technological system is controlled by non-leftists. If leftism ever becomes dominant in society, so that the technological system becomes a tool in the hands of leftists, they will enthusiastically use it and promote its growth. In doing this they will be repeating a pattern that leftism has shown again and again in the past. When the Bolsheviks in Russia were outsiders, they vigorously opposed censorship and the secret police, they advocated self-determination for ethnic minorities, and so forth; but as soon as they came into power themselves, they imposed a tighter censorship and created a more ruthless secret police than any that had existed under the tsars, and they oppressed ethnic minorities at least as much as the tsars had done. In the United States, a couple of decades ago when leftists were a minority in our universities, leftist professors were vigorous proponents of academic freedom, but today, in those of our universities where leftists have become dominant, they have shown themselves ready to take away everyone else's academic freedom. (This is "political correctness.") The same will happen with leftists and technology: They will use it to oppress everyone else if they ever get it under their own control.

¹ This statement refers to our particular brand of anarchism. A wide variety of social attitudes have been called "anarchist," and it may be that many who consider themselves anarchists would not accept our statement of paragraph 215. It should be noted, by the way, that there is a nonviolent anarchist movement whose members probably would not accept FC as anarchist and certainly would not approve of FC's violent methods.

217. In earlier revolutions, leftists of the most power-hungry type, repeatedly, have first co-operated with non-leftist revolutionaries, as well as with leftists of a more libertarian inclination, and later have double-crossed them to seize power for themselves. Robespierre did this in the French Revolution, the Bolsheviks did it in the Russian Revolution, the communists did it in Spain in 1938 and Castro and his followers did it in Cuba. Given the past history of leftism, it would be utterly foolish for non-leftist revolutionaries today to collaborate with leftists.

218. Various thinkers have pointed out that leftism is a kind of religion. Leftism is not a religion in the strict sense because leftist doctrine does not postulate the existence of any supernatural being. But for the leftist, leftism plays a psychological role much like that which religion plays for some people. The leftist NEEDS to believe in leftism; it plays a vital role in his psychological economy. His beliefs are not easily modified by logic or facts. He has a deep conviction that leftism is morally Right with a capital R, and that he has not only a right but a duty to impose leftist morality on everyone. (However, many of the people we are referring to as “leftists” do not think of themselves as leftists and would not describe their system of beliefs as leftism. We use the term “leftism” because we don’t know of any better word to designate the spectrum of related creeds that includes the feminist, gay rights, political correctness, etc., movements, and because these movements have a strong affinity with the old left. See paragraphs 227–230.)

219. Leftism is totalitarian force. Wherever leftism is in a position of power it tends to invade every private corner and force every thought into a leftist mold. In part this is because of the quasi-religious character of leftism: Everything contrary to leftist beliefs represents Sin. More importantly, leftism is a totalitarian force because of the leftists’ drive for power. The leftist seeks to satisfy his need for power through identification with a social movement, and he tries to go through the power process by helping to pursue and attain the goals of the movement (see paragraph 83). That is, the leftist’s real motive is not to attain the ostensible goals of leftism; in reality he is motivated by the sense of power he gets from struggling for and then reaching a social goal.² Consequently the leftist is never satisfied with the goals he has already attained; his need for the power process leads him always to pursue some new goal. The leftist wants equal opportunities for minorities. When that is attained he insists on statistical equality of achievement by minorities. And as long as anyone harbors in some corner of his mind a negative attitude toward some minority, the leftist has to re-educate him. And ethnic minorities are not enough; no one can be allowed to have a negative attitude toward homosexuals, disabled people, fat people, old people, ugly people, and on and on and on. It’s not enough that the public should be informed about the hazards of smoking; a warning has to be stamped on every package of cigarettes. Then cigarette advertising has to be restricted if not banned. The activists will never be satisfied until tobacco is outlawed, and after that it will be alcohol, then junk food, etc. Activists have fought gross child abuse, which is reasonable. But now they want to stop all spanking. When they have done that they will want to ban something else they consider unwholesome, then another thing and then another. They will never be satisfied until they have complete control over all child-rearing practices. And then they will move on to another cause.

220. Suppose you asked leftists to make a list of ALL the things that were wrong with society, and then suppose you instituted EVERY social change that they demanded. It is safe to say that within a couple of years the majority of leftists would find something new to complain about,

² Many leftists are motivated also by hostility, but the hostility probably results in part from a frustrated need for power.

some new social “evil” to correct; because, once again, the leftist is motivated less by distress at society’s ills than by the need to satisfy his drive for power by imposing his solutions on society.

221. Because of the restrictions placed on their thought and behavior by their high level of socialization, many leftists of the oversocialized type cannot pursue power in the ways that other people do. For them the drive for power has only one morally acceptable outlet, and that is in the struggle to impose their morality on everyone.

222. Leftists, especially those of the oversocialized type, are True Believers in the sense of Eric Hoffer’s book, *The True Believer*. But not all True Believers are of the same psychological type as leftists. Presumably a true-believing Nazi, for instance, is very different psychologically from a true-believing leftist. Because of their capacity for single-minded devotion to a cause, True Believers are a useful, perhaps a necessary, ingredient of any revolutionary movement. This presents a problem with which we must admit we don’t know how to deal. We aren’t sure how to harness the energies of the True Believer to a revolution against technology. At present all we can say is that no True Believer will make a safe recruit to the revolution unless his commitment is exclusively to the destruction of technology. If he is committed also to another ideal, he may want to use technology as a tool for pursuing that other ideal. (See paragraphs 200, 201.)

223. Some readers may say, “This shit about leftism is a lot of crap. I know John and Jane who are leftist types and they don’t have all these totalitarian tendencies.” It’s quite true that many leftists, possibly even a numerical majority, are decent people who sincerely believe in tolerating others’ values (up to a point) and wouldn’t want to use high-handed methods to reach their social goals. Our remarks about leftism are not meant to apply to every individual leftist but to describe the general character of leftism as a movement. And the general character of a movement is not necessarily determined by the numerical proportions of the various kinds of people involved in the movement.

224. The people who rise to positions of power in leftist movements tend to be leftists of the most power-hungry type, because power-hungry people are those who strive hardest to get into positions of power. Once the power-hungry types have captured control of the movement, there are many leftists of a gentler breed who inwardly disapprove of many of the actions of the leaders, but cannot bring themselves to oppose them. They NEED their faith in the movement, and because they cannot give up this faith they go along with the leaders. True, SOME leftists do have the guts to oppose the totalitarian tendencies that emerge, but they generally lose, because the power-hungry types are better organized, are more ruthless and Machiavellian and have taken care to build themselves a strong power-base.

225. These phenomena appeared clearly in Russia and other countries that were taken over by leftists. Similarly, before the breakdown of communism in the USSR, leftist types in the West would seldom criticize that country. If prodded they would admit that the USSR did many wrong things, but then they would try to find excuses for the communists and begin talking about the faults of the West. They always opposed Western military resistance to communist aggression. Leftist types all over the world vigorously protested the U.S. military action in Vietnam, but when the USSR invaded Afghanistan they did nothing. Not that they approved of the Soviet actions; but, because of their leftist faith, they just couldn’t bear to put themselves in opposition to communism. Today, in those of our universities where “political correctness” has become dominant, there are probably many leftist types who privately disapprove of the suppression of academic freedom, but they go along with it anyway.

226. Thus the fact that many individual leftists are personally mild and fairly tolerant people by no means prevents leftism as a whole from having a totalitarian tendency.

227. Our discussion of leftism has a serious weakness. It is still far from clear what we mean by the word “leftist.” There doesn’t seem to be much we can do about this. Today leftism is fragmented into a whole spectrum of activist movements. Yet not all activist movements are leftist, and some activist movements (e.g., radical environmentalism) seem to include both personalities of the leftist type and personalities of thoroughly un-leftist types who ought to know better than to collaborate with leftists. Varieties of leftists fade out gradually into varieties of non-leftists and we ourselves would often be hard-pressed to decide whether a given individual is or is not a leftist. To the extent that it is defined at all, our conception of leftism is defined by the discussion of it that we have given in this article, and we can only advise the reader to use his own judgment in deciding who is a leftist.

228. But it will be helpful to list some criteria for diagnosing leftism. These criteria cannot be applied in a cut and dried manner. Some individuals may meet some of the criteria without being leftists, some leftists may not meet any of the criteria. Again, you just have to use your judgment.

229. The leftist is oriented toward large-scale collectivism. He emphasizes the duty of the individual to serve society and the duty of society to take care of the individual. He has a negative attitude toward individualism. He often takes a moralistic tone. He tends to be for gun control, for sex education and other psychologically “enlightened” educational methods, for social planning, for affirmative action, for multiculturalism. He tends to identify with victims. He tends to be against competition and against violence, but he often finds excuses for those leftists who do commit violence. He is fond of using the common catchphrases of the left, like “racism,” “sexism,” “homophobia,” “capitalism,” “imperialism,” “neocolonialism,” “genocide,” “social change,” “social justice,” “social responsibility.” Maybe the best diagnostic trait of the leftist is his tendency to sympathize with the following movements: feminism, gay rights, ethnic rights, disability rights, animal rights political correctness. Anyone who strongly sympathizes with ALL of these movements is almost certainly a leftist.³

230. The more dangerous leftists, that is, those who are most power-hungry, are often characterized by arrogance or by a dogmatic approach to ideology. However, the most dangerous leftists of all may be certain oversocialized types who avoid irritating displays of aggressiveness and refrain from advertising their leftism, but work quietly and unobtrusively to promote collectivist values, “enlightened” psychological techniques for socializing children, dependence of the individual on the system, and so forth. These crypto-leftists (as we may call them) approximate certain bourgeois types as far as practical action is concerned, but differ from them in psychology, ideology and motivation. The ordinary bourgeois tries to bring people under control of the system in order to protect his way of life, or he does so simply because his attitudes are conventional. The crypto-leftist tries to bring people under control of the system because he is a True Believer in a collectivistic ideology. The crypto-leftist is differentiated from the average leftist of the oversocialized type by the fact that his rebellious impulse is weaker and he is more securely

³ It is important to understand that we mean someone who sympathizes with these movements as they exist today in our society. One who believes that women, homosexuals, etc., should have equal rights is not necessarily a leftist. The feminist, gay rights, etc., movements that exist in our society have the particular ideological tone that characterizes leftism, and if one believes, for example, that women should have equal rights it does not necessarily follow that one must sympathize with the feminist movement as it exists today.

socialized. He is differentiated from the ordinary well-socialized bourgeois by the fact that there is some deep lack within him that makes it necessary for him to devote himself to a cause and immerse himself in a collectivity. And maybe his (well-sublimated) drive for power is stronger than that of the average bourgeois.

Final Note

231. Throughout this article we've made imprecise statements and statements that ought to have had all sorts of qualifications and reservations attached to them; and some of our statements may be flatly false. Lack of sufficient information and the need for brevity made it impossible for us to formulate our assertions more precisely or add all the necessary qualifications. And of course in a discussion of this kind one must rely heavily on intuitive judgment, and that can sometimes be wrong. So we don't claim that this article expresses more than a crude approximation to the truth.

232. All the same, we are reasonably confident that the general outlines of the picture we have painted here are roughly correct. Just one possible weak point needs to be mentioned. We have portrayed leftism in its modern form as a phenomenon peculiar to our time and as a symptom of the disruption of the power process. But we might possibly be wrong about this. Oversocialized types who try to satisfy their drive for power by imposing their morality on everyone have certainly been around for a long time. But we THINK that the decisive role played by feelings of inferiority, low self-esteem, powerlessness, identification with victims by people who are not themselves victims, is a peculiarity of modern leftism. Identification with victims by people not themselves victims can be seen to some extent in 19th-century leftism and early Christianity, but as far as we can make out, symptoms of low self-esteem, etc., were not nearly so evident in these movements, or in any other movements, as they are in modern leftism. But we are not in a position to assert confidently that no such movements have existed prior to modern leftism. This is a significant question to which historians ought to give their attention.

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